

Famous Frontiersmen & Indians

BEADLE'S

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OR,
The White Sioux Queen.

A Story of the Hero-Plainsman's
Strange Career.

BY COLONEL PRENTISS INGRAHAM,
AUTHOR OF "DASHING CHARLIE," "BUCK
TAYLOR'S BOYS," "PAWNEE BILL'S
PLEDGE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.
THE FUGITIVE.

"PERDITION take the boy! he was the cause
of my ill-fortune, for, but for him I would have
led those Rescuers into an ambush, and then all
would have gone the way I wished."

The man who uttered these words was fairly
flying along a trail in the far Northwest, for he

THAT THE BEAUTIFUL SIOUX QUEEN SHOULD PROTECT DASHING CHARLIE AND HIS
UNCLE MADE THE SAVAGES FURIOUS.

was urging his horse at each bound he made by a dig in the flanks with the cruel spurs.

He was a thorough type of the borderman in face and dress, fully armed, and appeared like a man who was in a desperate situation.

As he rode along he would glance behind him from time to time, as though expecting to see some one on his track.

His face was a strong one, though the lower features were hidden by a long beard, and he wore his dark hair long, falling upon his broad shoulders.

But it was not a good face, not one to trust, rather one to dread, as there was much of latent evil dwelling far back in his eyes.

It was at its worst too then, for he had been thwarted, as his words had made known, in his plot of evil, and by a boy.

He was also in dread of his life, and fear, hatred and disappointment were stamped together upon his countenance.

His horse was urged on mercilessly along the trail, up hill and down, on rough trail and good, until at last he was forced to dismount and spare the animal by walking.

The tired horse followed patiently, and gained what rest he could in the next few miles.

Then a stream was crossed, where he was watered, and given half an hour to crop at the juicy grass upon its banks.

Again mounting, the horse was urged on once more, through a high hill, that gave the rider a glance back over the trail for many miles, showed him there was no danger of pursuit, or rather of being overtaken.

Still, for some purpose he pressed on, as though eager to reach his destination.

At last the country grew more mountainous, and the man was compelled to climb the steep trail on foot, leaving his broken-down horse to follow.

As darkness drew near he turned from the trail, toward a rock that arose like a tower to one side.

This he climbed to the summit, and it was no easy task to scale the steep, rocky sides.

Reaching the top he found there a pole, around one end of which was wrapped a white cloth.

Raising the pole he waved it from right to left three times, slowly.

Then he awaited for some minutes and repeated the act, his eyes meanwhile fixed upon a distant cliff across the valley.

Suddenly a white object appeared upon the cliff, and a man was seen with a staff and white flag in his hand.

This he waved from left to right three times, and the man on the cliff did likewise, after which he furled the emblem of peace, placed the pole again upon the rock, where also was piled up a quantity of wood, while there were evidences that fires had been built there quite often.

These fires were to signal by night, as the flag was used by day.

Descending the side of the tower-like rock the man went to where his horse was feeding, and again continued on his way.

The trail led down into the valley, and crossing it to the ridge beyond, the fugitive found himself approaching the cliff from whence his signal had been answered.

It was dark as he neared the cliff, but he rode on without hesitation, or seeming fear, though he could not but have recognized the one who answered the signal he had made, as an Indian.

The trail wound around the cliff, and close to it, was very narrow just there, and it was a point which a dozen determined men, stationed among the sheltering rocks, could hold against a couple of hundred foes.

Nearer and nearer he drew to the cliff, wound around it, then climbed to the ridge above.

As he did so, and came upon a level with the cliff, suddenly he found himself confronted by half a dozen Sioux warriors, all armed and covering him with their arrows, and all in their war-paint, as though ready for battle, for in spite of the signal given them as one of peaceful intention, they suspected him of being a foe.

CHAPTER II.

A TIMELY WARNING.

THE white man who found half a dozen Sioux confronting him with seemingly hostile intention, did not appear to be in the least flurried, for he regarded them calmly, and addressing them in their own language, said:

"My Sioux brothers have blind eyes not to remember their pale-face brother, the Red Scalper."

Instantly the effect of the words of the man

was evident, for one of the warriors stepped forward with extended hand, while he responded:

"The face of the Red Scalper is hidden under his beard, since he left our people, and then it is night now."

"No, the Sioux are not blind, for they know their pale-face brother now."

"They saw the signal and answered it; but when he drew near they supposed he was a foe who had learned the secret of the signals."

"The Red Scalper is welcome, for he has been long away."

The other braves now came forward and grasping the hand of the white man gave utterance to a fervent:

"How!"

"The Red Scalper has not time to remain here, for he must hasten on to see the chief, Red Hair."

"Let me have one of your fleetest ponies, and keep my horse here with you."

"There is news to tell, for the pale-face foes of my red brothers are marching to attack the Sioux village."

"Send two braves to the signal rock to watch for their coming and give warning by lighting a fire, so that those here can hasten on to the village and tell the Red Hair."

"I will go at once, and my brothers here must not sleep, for death is creeping upon them in the darkness, and the Red Scalper has risked his life to save them."

The words of the white man created a profound impression upon the Indians, who became greatly excited over the dread of a foe being so near their village.

They at once brought him one of their fleetest ponies, and dispatched three warriors to the signal rock.

Mounting the Indian pony the Red Scalper, as he had called himself, rode on like the wind along the ridge.

The ridge widened as he went, and was seen to be heavily timbered, with steep, rocky sides.

A few miles away it was overtowered by a high range, and upon either side were valleys through which ran crystal streams.

Upon the edge of the ridge was the village of the Sioux, consisting of over a thousand tepees, while in the valleys were feeding large herds of ponies and cattle, all of which could be driven in a short while to the mountain range beyond, where a foe dare not follow them.

The site of the village was well chosen as a healthful spot, with plenty of wood at hand, spring streams trickling down the mountain-sides, and with the valleys as grazing-grounds for their enormous herds.

Through a pass in the mountains a retreat could be made, and a few hundred warriors could there keep back a small army from pursuit.

The signal tower and the cliff guard post were spots where the approach of an enemy could be seen far away and a warning given, and the nature of the country was such that an attacking force would have to follow the direct trail leading to the Indian village from that direction.

To get there from another point, one would have to flank the mountain and come through the pass in the range.

Upon an eminence in the village was a large tepee, where the head chief dwelt.

The Indians, secure in their retreat, and a warning from their advance posts, were not dreading evil, and were gathered in groups about the many camp-fires, visible to the fugitive as he rode toward the large tepee which was the headquarters of Red Hair, the renegade chief of the Sioux.

Braves, squaws and children eyed him curiously as he passed their camp-fires, but he waved his hand and gave them a word of welcome in their own tongue as he rode along.

At last he halted at the large tepee, threw himself from his pony, and stood before a man who was just sitting down at a rustic table to eat his supper, which a negress was placing before him.

"How is my brother, the chief Red Hair?" said the stranger.

"Hal that voice I know! By Heaven, Sam Jenness, it is you!" cried the chief, springing to his feet.

"Yes, Brad; it is your old pard, Red Scalper."

"And glad am I to see you again; only, why have you come, Sam?" asked the chief, as he wrung the hand of his visitor.

"To give you a timely warning of danger; to tell you that I am pursued now by a force of men now on their way to this village," was the startling response of the stranger.

CHAPTER III.

THE WHITE SIOUX CHIEF.

THE man who sat in the large tepee, in the Sioux village, and whom the visitor had addressed as Chief Red Hair, was a very striking-looking personage.

He was six feet in height, and straight as an arrow, having the carriage of a soldier.

His shoulders were broad and massive, his form slender yet athletic, and his hands and feet very small and shapely.

Excepting that he wore cavalry boots and spurs, his dress was that of an Indian chief, and he wore it well.

His buckskin leggings and hunting-shirt were fringed, beaded and ornamented with porcupine-quills, while around his neck were necklaces of grizzly bear claws, eagle-bones and other ornaments.

He wore a belt of arms, consisting of a bowie-knife and revolvers, and a string of scalps hung also there, and scalps too that were not all from the heads of red-skins.

But strangest of all about this man, a renegade white who was chief of the Sioux, was that he was strangely handsome, his features being stamped in a noble mold.

His hair was a bright red, curling and hung down his back nearly to his waist, and he also had a long mustache of the same hue, while his eyes were of midnight blackness, large, dreamy and shaded by the longest of lashes.

The Indians called him "Red Hair," and he was known to the whites as the "Red Renegade."

Both names suited him well, and the latter expressed just what he was, a renegade white man who had allied his fortunes to the Indians for some reason known only to himself.

From whence he had come no one knew, for he had not been seen or known in the camps along the border.

It became noticed that the Sioux were showing a great deal of generalship in their war-trails, and at last a scout reported that their leader was a white man.

Once a fort had been struck at night by a daring band of red-skins, while five sixths of the soldiers had gone to attack the Indian village from whence they had come.

The village was found deserted by the soldiers, who returned to discover that the red-skins had captured the armory of the fort and secured a large quantity of arms and ammunition, besides running off a herd of fine beef cattle and several hundred horses.

The blow fell heavily, for a number of soldiers had fallen, and if a single brave had been killed his body was carried off by his victorious comrades.

This daring and successful raid it was soon known was under the command of Chief Red Hair.

A settlement was attacked, and women and children were carried off at another time, and again and again Red Hair made his daring and successful dashes along the border, until his name became a perfect terror to all.

The settlers offered a reward for his scalp, and the general commanding set a price on his head, but all without avail.

It was said that the man had once been an army officer, whose crimes had driven him to outlawry, and others reported that he was one who had been reared in the Indian villages.

Again it was asserted that he was a noted California desperado, who had escaped the gal-lows and sought a refuge among the Sioux.

There was a scout from the far Southwest who said that he had known a Texas outlaw answering the description of Chief Red Hair, but that the man he had in mind was dead, or supposed to be, having been hanged by the Rangers and Regulators of the Lone Star State.

If he had escaped in any way he did not know of it, but this man who commanded the Sioux answered his description perfectly.

And so speculation went along in mining-camp, settlement and fort regarding the white Sioux chief, not a soul being able to tell aught regarding him, more than that he seemed to hate the whites with a hatred as intense as the red-skins felt for them, and was even more cruel toward them, showing no mercy to man, woman or child, until he also became known as the "Red Monster."

The rewards offered for his capture or scalp had tempted many bold men to seek to gain it; but they failed in their efforts, and Red Hair the white Sioux still continued the head chief of the red tribe with whom he had cast his lot.

And this man, bated, despised, feared as he was, had the face of an Adonis, was as gentle-voiced as a woman in his ordinary conversation,

and had a voice like a bugle when commanding his red braves in battle, or when aroused to anger.

And it was to the tepee of the Red Hair that the fugitive horseman had made his way at such mad speed.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TWO RENEGADES.

"So there is danger ahead, you say, Pard Sam?" was the quiet remark of the renegade chief, when he had heard the warning of the fugitive horseman.

"There is indeed, and you have little time to prepare for it, chief, though I rode my horse down to give you warning."

"And I supposed you were in Texas!" and the chief was still calm, almost indifferent, it seemed.

"As I was until a few weeks ago; but having completed the business I went there on I returned, and just in time to learn of this attack upon you."

"So you completed your Texas work, eh, Sam?" the chief said with a show of considerable interest.

"Yes, but of that I can tell you at another time, chief, for now I inform you of your danger, and I advise you to be prepared for it."

"Many you said, were coming to attack me?" "Captain Emmett the fur-trader, and a hundred bordermen, with a column stronger in numbers, marching out from the three forts to support him."

"Ah! that looks bad indeed; but how far are they away?"

"The advance under Emmett is following but a few hours behind me, and should be here to-morrow early in the day."

"Time enough to prepare for them, though I shall put my warriors on guard to-night; but now tell me how you are here when I supposed you were away down in Texas, upon the business matter that was to be of mutual benefit to both of us?"

"If you must hear that first, Chief Red Hair, in the face of my warning of danger, and that you have no time to lose, I will tell you that the one you sent me to find for you is dead."

"Dead! dead! Good God! she is dead?" and the words fell from the lips of the man in a tone of horror, in which also was mingled deepest anguish as though he had been hit hard by the news he had heard.

"Yes, she died two months ago."

"Tell me, did her husband die as I had heard, one year ago?"

"Yes; he was killed by the Comanches, it was said," and the man called the Red Scalper laughed in a knowing way.

"And did she die of grief for his loss?" and there was a sneer in the voice of the chief as he asked the question.

"It may be, for she mourned his death deeply, it was said, and faded away."

"Ah me! what memories crowd upon me now that I learn that she is dead, the one being in all this world that I loved, the one whom I was robbed of by one whose name you spoke a few minutes ago."

"Who was it?"

"The fur-trader, Emmett."

"Ah! he was your rival, then?"

"Yes."

"Though not a successful one, as she married another man."

"That I never did, never can account for; but he robbed me of her, and then lost her himself, it seems."

"He is coming this way now to attack me, to rob me of life, to capture and hang Chief Red Hair, the Monster, for his crimes."

"Well, I loved her far more than I did life, but he shall not rob me of it as he did of that one being in all the wide world to me."

"Dead, you said she was, Sam?"

"Yes, I arrived too late to see her alive, for she had just died; but I went to her funeral."

"Ah! you know her grave, then?"

"Yes."

"Some day I will have you guide me to it; but not now, not for a long time yet."

"Will you now let me tell you of what I have discovered?"

"In Texas?"

"No, in Omaha."

"Let me first hear your story of the business in Texas," and the man's face, which had become strangely softened and sad since he heard of the death of a woman whom he had loved, seemed to ignore all danger and wish to dwell alone upon the story of the death of the one who had so won his heart.

"Well, I went, as you directed me, chief, on the search for the woman, armed with the instructions you had given me for finding her."

"I learned that after the loss of her child, whom she had always regarded as drowned, while others believed that it had been captured by Comanches, her husband and herself moved to another home, far from the scene of their misfortune."

"They established there a new home, and then came the second blow upon the woman, her husband's death at the hands of the Comanches, or at least it was so believed."

"Yes, but we know better, Sam."

"Yes, chief."

"And then?"

"I found that her health had failed, under this double shock, and she soon after followed her husband."

"Knowing then that my further delay was useless, I decided to return to you at once."

"You did perfectly right, Scalper Sam; but now tell me of this discovery you have made of an attack upon my village by Captain Emmett and his men."

As though glad to get the chief's attention at last, the Red Scalper went on to tell his story.

CHAPTER V.

SCALPER SAM'S STORY.

THE Chief Red Hair, renegade, outcast that he was, and his hand stained with crimes, showed that he at last had a heart where the one he loved was concerned, for he flinched under the news of her death, and though he listened to Scalper Sam's story, his face showed that he was overwhelmed with a deep grief, which his own danger could not drive away.

He sat with his face in the shadow, and only now and then turned toward his companion as some remark was made, upon which he asked a question, or seemed more deeply interested.

"You see, pard, I got back to Omaha to find out that there was something going wrong and I determined, instead of coming straight on here to stop and ferret it out."

"I got on the trail very quickly, and knowing that a movement was up against you I hit upon a plan to circumvent the plot."

"You know I am a pretty good penman?"

"Yes, I believe your first crime was a forgery which sent you to prison."

"Don't recall the past, at least in my case, chief."

"As I am a good penman, and I knew the writing of several officers in Texas, I went to my room in the tavern in Omaha and wrote myself some letters."

"What for?"

"Some letters of introduction they were, saying that I was a faithful and skillful scout, and going to the Northwest I could be recommended most highly should I be needed at the forts."

"These letters I took to Colonel Sibley, and he told me that he had the full number of scouts, but gave me a line to Captain Emmett, who was fitting out a secret expedition to attack Red Hair the renegade's village of Sioux."

"Ah, I see! pray go on, for your story interests me, Sam."

"Of course not a soul knew me, and my plan was to play my game well until I could desert and come on and give you warning."

"That was right."

"The discovery I made was that Captain Emmett, the fur-trader had enlisted one hundred picked men, to come here and secure white captives in the Sioux village and capture you and all other white men living here among the Indians as their allies."

"We renegades, in fact?" sneered the chief.

"It's a harsh word, but that is about the size of it, chief."

"And then?"

"Of course, if not warned of his coming, a hundred such men as he was, could do a great deal of damage, but when supported by three columns of soldiers, not marching to the attack, but coming out from the forts to protect him, the result would be most disastrous, I thought."

"Recognizing one of your spies in Omaha I sent him at once here with the news."

"He did not come."

"No, for he was suspected, headed off and killed."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, and by the one who suspected me."

"Captain Emmett?"

"No, but Charlie Emmett, his daredevil nephew, whom they call Dashing Charlie."

"He is but a boy, but, oh, such a boy!"

"He followed his uncle's trail from Kentucky,

where he lived, out to the fur country, and though he passed through dangers untold he lived to thwart my plans."

"I tell you, chief, he is a little wonder."

"You are telling me of a boy whom I know but too well, Sam, for he was brought to me a prisoner, captured on his way to overtake his uncle, soon after your departure on your mission to Texas."

"I took a fancy to the boy and treated him well, for I had another purpose in view and did not wish to harm him."

"And he escaped?"

"He did, indeed, for he followed me when I went with my braves to ambush Captain Emmett's fur train on its return and capture the outfit."

"You failed?"

"Oh, yes, the boy followed my trail until near where he could act for himself, and he headed his uncle off, told of my plot and where we expected to surprise we were utterly wiped out, I barely escaping with my life."

"Yes, Sam, I know the boy full well."

"Well, chief, he suspected me, though why, I could not tell, and he played the innocent on me splendidly, for he saw me meet two Sioux braves in the timber, and I dispatched them to you."

"This he told his uncle that night in camp, and my luck alone saved me, for suspicious of the boy I crept near to see what he was telling, and only a few words were needed to let me know that I'd be hanged by morning if I did not skip."

"I did git, and git lively, and yet that boy was after me along with a Pawnee Indian Pard, and out of those I sent to warn you of danger I am the only one who reached you."

"Now you have heard my story, chief."

"Yes, and I owe it to you, Sam, that our village is not surprised."

CHAPTER VI.

THE ATTACK.

THE Chief Red Hair sat in silence for some minutes, after hearing the Red Scalper's story, while the latter moved about anxiously, as he could not understand why an alarm was not at once sounded through the Indian villages.

At last Red Hair said:

"Sam, I told you that Captain Emmett and myself were rivals in love?"

"Yes."

"He kept me from marrying the woman whom you now tell me is dead, and then she became the wife of another."

"I became desperate and, well, I went to the devil, or became a very devil myself."

"I am now what I am, and I owe it to this same man Emmett, or at least I think I do, which amounts to about the same thing."

"Now let me ask you if you remember Nick Nye?"

"Yes, a renegade who turned miner."

"A miner who had turned renegade, rather, to prevent the Sioux from killing him."

"I remember him."

"Well he struck it rich and went to Omaha, got into a quarrel, was befriended by Emmett yet died of a wound he received in the row."

"To Emmett, who took him to his cabin, he made a confession of his find, and gave the particulars of how to find his mine up here in these mountains."

"I understand."

"Now Emmett could not get the support of the Government to go gold-hunting, so he put up the plea of rescuing prisoners in the hands of the Sioux, and to capture me, and thus the army comes to protect him."

"I begin to see what you are after, chief."

"He is coming here to drive my village away, hold his position and work that mine of Nick Nye's, and if he can kill or capture me and rescue the white prisoners I hold, well and good."

"I believe you are right, chief."

"I know that I am, and I shall counter-plot against him."

"I am with you, chief."

"I am glad to have your aid, Sam, for with the death of my pards, or lieutenants, Nick Nye, Limber Joe, and others, I am in need of good men."

"You have but to command me, chief."

"Well, I shall first make you next to myself in rank, for you deserve it for the warning you bring."

"Though not well known here among the Sioux, having lived so little among them, I will show the chiefs that you are deserving of the position I give you."

"Thank you, chief."

"My plan is to get the camp into the moun-

tains, as soon as possible, and fight the coming rescuers right on this ground with my braves.

"And, more, I shall capture Emmett and his nephew alive, for they must not be harmed, for they both know, I feel certain, where this mine is."

"If Emmett has not told the boy, then I can, by threats against his nephew bring him to terms."

"The very thing."

"I shall therefore capture the man and the boy alive, and once in my power I feel pretty sure we can get at the secret of the mine."

"If we can do this, then, Sam, we are rich men, and can give up the life of renegades, fly to a foreign land and live in luxury where no one knows us as we are."

"Now, what do you think of my counter-plot against Emmett?"

"It is splendid, chief, and I am with you heart and hand, and life, too, if necessary to sacrifice it."

"But let me urge you again to lose no time in preparing, for Emmett is no man to fool with, and that boy will urge him on with full speed, so you may look for them coming soon."

"You said they would have to send back to bring up the soldier column within supporting distance?"

"Yes, chief."

"Well, we'll expect an attack to-morrow night, hardly sooner, and I'll be ready for them."

"They could get here sooner, chief, if they did not wait for the supporting column to come up."

"Yes, but they will hardly attack without feeling safe if they are forced to retreat."

"There is no telling what Captain Emmett will do, chief, and the men with him could stand off at bay every brave you have in your village, if forced to do so, until the soldiers came up."

"Remember, they are frontiersmen, all of them, and they are armed and mounted splendidly."

"Well, I'll go the rounds and prepare the chiefs for the attack, and then woe be unto Emmett and his men when they dash in upon the village of the White Sioux Chief," and Red Hair meant all that he said, for he had abundant confidence in himself and in his "red soldiers," as he called his braves.

But sooner far than they were expected, into the Sioux village like an avalanche came Captain Emmett and his men, their wild war-cries echoing through the hills as they charged into the Sioux camp, their revolvers making deadly music as they came.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CAPTIVES.

THE Sioux were surprised after all, for the Rescuers had arrived sooner than they were expected.

The fact was that "the boy," as the Red Scalper called Dashing Charlie Emmett, had been shrewd enough to ferret out the spy in the band, and but for the flight of the man, his career would have ended then and there.

Then Dashing Charlie had gotten the permission of his uncle to go in pursuit of the fugitive renegade, and so hotly had he pressed him that he barely escaped with his life.

Captain Emmett, too, was a man who was in deadly earnest in all that he undertook.

He intended to have no failure of this expedition through any fault of his.

When he knew that the man he had enlisted as a guide was no more than a traitor, a renegade, and that he had escaped, he was sure that he would make with all speed for the Sioux camp to give the alarm.

Of course he would not expect the command to travel like a man flying for his life, and therefore would have hours the start of them.

But just here he was mistaken, for the captain argued that what one horse could do another could.

If some of his horses broke down under the terrible strain, then others were along, extras, to take their places.

If others failed, then the men so mounted could fall back with the pack-animals and act as a rescue, but still press on as hard as they could force their broken-down animals to go.

"Come, men, if we kill every horse we must get there, for we will find plenty of fresh ponies in the Indian village."

"Don't spare the spur for it is an unwritten law that the brute must perish to aid the human."

"Come, let there be no laggards."

Such were the words of Captain Emmett to his men, and it inspired them to the greatest exertion, and it won.

They swept into the Indian camp with irresistible force, and red-men and white men died on all sides.

Horses sunk under brave rescuers, and cries, groans, war-whoops and yells mingled with the rattle of revolvers and rifles, the screaming of women and children, and to add to the scene of terror and horror, the tepees were set on fire and red flames and blinding smoke rolled heavenward like the giant waves of the ocean.

But the Rescuers would not be beaten back; they had come to rescue the unfortunate and they would do it or die.

They had reached the group of white women and children, whom their red captors were driving off in flight with yells and blows, and they encircled them in grand style and tore them from their cruel foes.

But the movements of a band of warriors, all mounted and a hundred in number, attracted the attention of the Rescuers several times by their bold dashes.

To the surprise of the whites they did not fire showers upon them, but several times came rushing down upon the devoted band until forced to swerve away by the withering fire of the rifles.

Just as the captives had been rescued, suddenly the band of mounted warriors, who each time had reinforced their ranks after being forced to retreat, came out of a canyon directly upon the Rescuers.

There was a quick cry of alarm given, and a volley of rifle-balls emptied half a dozen Indian saddles.

But they never faltered, never fired a shot in return but came on like the wind.

At their head was a tall chief gorgeous in red trappings, a brilliant war bonnet of eagle-feathers and mounted upon a splendid blood bay stallion vicious as a tiger.

The chief rode splendidly, and in his left hand he held a long red lance, near the point of which fluttered a number of scalps.

There were scalps from blonde heads and brunettes, and long hair and short hair, and the hideous trophies seemed as a signal flag, or guidon for the braves to follow.

Straight down upon the Rescuers rode the daring band of braves, silent as specters, but for the thundering of their ponies' hoofs, and without drawing a bow-string or firing a shot.

They struck into the very midst of their white foes, there was an instant recoil, a staggering movement onward, and away swept the Sioux, while the revolvers rattled after them their bullets.

But suddenly a commanding voice rung out; the warriors wheeled and bit back for the first time, and showers of arrows fell among their white foes, emptying a dozen saddles.

"It is the Chief Red Hair that leads them," cried a voice, and all knew that there was no mistake, for under the war-bonnet of the daring leader was seen the long red hair of the renegade floating in the wind.

They had made a bold effort to capture him, the Rescuers had, but in vain, for he had seemed to bear a charmed life.

And when the daring red horsemen, had disappeared from sight once more it was discovered that the gallant leader of the Rescuers was missing.

"And Dashing Charlie is gone, too!"

"Yes, the boy is not to be found," rung out the cries.

And true it was, for in the charge of the Chief Red Hair and his hundred horsemen two captives had been taken, Captain Emmett and his nephew, Dashing Charlie.

CHAPTER VII.

DEAD OR ALIVE.

THE Rescuers had retreated, carrying with them the Indians' captives they had come to take from their cruel captivity.

The Sioux village was in ruins, and had been plundered.

Many horses and stock had been run off from the corrals and the victors had retreated doggedly, after their terrible blow.

Behind them were scores of dead red-skins, and many were wounded, besides the ruin, marks of their heavy blows struck in retaliation.

The Red Hair had rallied about him his braves and pressed the retreating whites hard. So hard in truth did he press them that he brought them to a stand to beat him off, forced them to come to bay.

And but for the coming of the soldiers, first one, then another column, the gallant band of Rescuers would have been wiped out.

Then followed a fierce battle, and the Sioux

were forced to fly, beaten at their own game of war.

Slowly the soldiers retreated with the band of Rescuers, greatly thinned in number, and, ugly as the panthers robbed of their young, the Sioux returned to their desolate homes.

The Rescuers had retreated and fought under a new leader, Doctor Dick Chalmers, the partner of Captain Emmett in the fur-trade, and a dashing, splendid fellow, true as steel to friend and foe.

It had cut him to the heart to leave behind him his friend and partner, and the gallant boy Dashing Charlie, whom he had come to love as his own son.

It was bitter indeed for him and for the men, all of whom were greatly attached to Captain Emmett and his daring young nephew.

Were they dead, or were they captives?

No one knew.

But certain all were that they had been killed or captured in the desperate rush made in the village by Red Hair and his hundred horsemen.

Why had not those mounted braves fired upon them before, the men wondered?

No one could answer the question, but all were well aware that they had fired, and with deadly effect, after their last charge.

Then, too, the captain and Dashing Charlie were missed.

No one had seen them fall, no one had seen them captured.

But they were not in the ranks of the Rescuers after the charge of Red Hair.

Doctor Chalmers, who was an ex-army surgeon, and acted as second in command of the Rescuers, as well as the surgeon, sent for Girard the guide, when the retreat homeward had begun in earnest, after the big battle, in which the soldiers had so timely arrived to chip in their leaden hail.

Girard the guide was a typical borderman, a perfect scout, and was known as one who had no fear.

"Well, Girard, the captain is gone?" said the doctor, sorrowfully.

"Yes, doctor, and that splendid boy, too."

"Killed, you think?"

"I'm afraid not, Doc."

"Afraid not?"

"Yes, sir."

"But why?"

"Well, doctor, you know Indian nature pretty well, and after the Sioux see their village, count their dead and wounded, and know that we have rescued all their captives, I say it will be better for the captain and Charlie to have been killed."

"Heap better."

"Sioux heap, big devil all time."

Both the doctor and the guide turned to the one who spoke.

It was Pawnee Pete, a Pawnee scout, that was the particular friend of Captain Emmett and Dashing Charlie.

But Pawnee Pete had been wounded in his pursuit of Scalper Sam, and was under Doctor Chalmers's especial charge.

"You think the Sioux will torture poor Emmett and the boy, Pawnee Pete?" asked Doc Chalmers, as he was generally called.

"Yes; heap kill 'em after have fun."

"That is what I fear."

"But they may escape, guide."

"I can see no chance for them under the circumstances, doctor, for the Sioux will act promptly in their case, to avenge the warriors fallen in the fight."

"I fear you are right, Girard; but I hope for the best, knowing what I do of Emmett and Charlie."

"Oh, they can escape if any one can; but I fear they will not be given the chance, sir."

"Well, let us hope for the best; but, Girard?"

"Yes, doctor?"

"Did you see that traitor, Scalper Sam, in the Indian village?"

"No, sir."

"Nor I."

"Pete have eyes, he see him."

"Ah, Pete, when and where?"

"He dress like Sioux, have face painted, and look like Sioux; but Pete know him when see him."

"He there, and heap bad man."

"You are right; but as we can do nothing now for poor Emmett and Charlie, we must arrange their rescue later, Girard."

"If they are still alive."

"True, and avenge them, if dead."

"Yes; take heap Sioux scalps if dead; but Pawnee Pete find out some day," he said in a tone indicating perfect confidence in himself.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CAPTURE.

THERE was no more daring, dashing man on the border, than was Captain Emmett, the leader of the party of Rescuers.

A fine-looking man, with frank, determined face, dignified mien, and a physique that was wiry, athletic and graceful, he was an attractive fellow wherever he went.

His nephew, Charlie Emmett, was much like him, enough so to have been his own son, and he possessed, too, much the same nature, though Dashing Charlie was one to take desperate chances, where his uncle weighed all his movements.

The two had been in the thickest of the fray since it began, and the man kept as near to the boy as he could, knowing his rash way of doing things when excited.

He could not but admire Charlie's pluck more and more, and was glad to note that the boy did not throw any shots away, but coolly picked out his man each time he fired.

"Uncle, why don't that band fire on us?" asked the boy, noting the fact that the one hundred daring warriors in their frequent and sudden charges did not use their weapons upon the whites.

"They doubtless wish to capture our party alive, Charlie, and so do not care to kill or hurt us now, hoping to torture us to death."

"They've laid out a big work to undertake, I guess," said Dashing Charlie.

"I think so myself; but, Charlie?"

"Yes, uncle?"

"Do you see Scalper Sam, the traitor, among that band?"

"I see the chief, Red Hair."

"Yes, I made him out, but I wish to capture him alive, so gave orders to the men not to kill him."

"I think the man on the roan horse is Scalper Sam, sir, for he looks it, in spite of his painted face and Indian togs."

"I guess you are right, Charlie, for I picked out that same fellow as the one we wanted."

"He came with us to betray, and but for your watchfulness would have done so."

"Suspected by us he made his escape, and that we found the Sioux prepared for us is on account of the warning he gave them."

"I want that man, Scalper Sam, Charlie, and Red Hair, too, so both must be captured alive if it can be done."

Dashing Charlie and his uncle, after this conversation, were parted for a while, and yet when the band of Indians, led by the chief, made their last desperate charge, they were again near together.

Whatever the others of the Rescuers thought of the motive of this one hundred red fighters charging so daringly into their midst, and striking no blows with their weapons, it quickly flashed upon the mind of Captain Emmett just what the reason was.

He saw the Sioux sweep down in solid and irresistible force.

They divided in three columns, two of forty men each, one of twenty.

The latter was under command of Red Hair himself, and the others did the fighting.

The small band of a score of warriors struck the very center of the band of Rescuers, and staggered a moment under the resistance they met with.

But only for an instant, for on they swept, and with them in their very midst, with lariats thrown over them, pinioning their arms to their sides, were Captain Emmett and Dashing Charlie.

The two had fought manfully until overcome, and half a dozen of the score of braves had bitten the dust.

But in the smoke of battle, the dust rising from the hoofs of the horses, the confusion of conflict, the two captives had been carried off without their comrades seeing their misfortune.

Like a gale the band of captors swept on, while the other two squads of forty each closed in behind them, and then struck back and in deadly earnest.

They sent showers of arrows upon the Rescuers, who were momentarily staggered by the charging warriors who had cut through their ranks.

A few minutes more and the Chief Red Hair and his one hundred had disappeared over the ridge, and the braves threw themselves in as a rear guard to the retreating Indians, squaws, children and aged people, with what things they could save from their burning village.

"It cost me a score of good warriors, Scalper Sam, that charge of ours; but it caught the two

I wanted, and the sacrifice is well worth the result, yes, worth a hundred braves," said Red Hair, grimly, as they reached the ridge where they were safe, their two prisoners in the rear under a guard of braves.

"Yes, now you have Emmett in your power you can see both riches and revenge ahead of you," announced Scalper Sam.

"Yes, for both of us."

"Of course, for I am your firm friend and ally, Chief Red Hair," was Scalper Sam's response, though had the chief seen the expression far back in the eyes of the man who uttered the words he would have felt that he was a renegade in friendship as well as to his race.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE RETREAT.

CONTRARY to his expectation Captain Emmett and Charlie were not maltreated by their captors.

Chief Red Hair had left them in safe hands, beyond all possibility of escape; but though they were scowled savagely upon by the braves they were not struck or injured, as was the wont of the Sioux with their captives.

Charlie, in his captivity among the Sioux had made their language a study, and he had learned to speak it well, though this fact he cunningly had kept hidden from his foes.

He told his uncle, as they rode side by side in the retreat.

"They are making for their stronghold in the mountains, where all intended going had we given them time to retreat."

"And the Red Hair, did you learn whither he has gone, Charlie?"

"To fight the Rescuers, and try and capture them before the soldiers come up, uncle."

"They will never do it, for Doc Chalmers knows what he is about and just how to handle his men."

"They will stand at bay and beat off the Sioux until the soldiers come up to their relief, when Chief Red Hair will be very soundly whipped."

"But, uncle, the soldiers can never take the stronghold of the Sioux, so the chances for our rescue through them is slight," responded Dashing Charlie.

"You know the place?"

"Yes, uncle, when I was a captive of Red Hair he took me with him there when he went to the stronghold."

"They keep their extra supplies there, horses and a few braves always on guard."

"We are on the trail now to the place."

"Well, Charlie, Red Hair had some motive in wishing to capture you and I."

"His actions showed it, and we are prisoners for some especial purpose I feel assured."

"But keep your eyes skinned, my boy, for a chance to escape."

"I am watching my chance, uncle, you may be certain, and I'll keep you posted if I am allowed to do so," returned the boy, and he took his capture with the coolness of a veteran.

"I fear, Charlie, my life on the frontier has gotten you into very serious trouble, though I hope not."

"It will make a man of me, uncle, so I do not mind it."

"But let me tell you now, while I have the chance, that the girl who is known as the Sioux Queen is a friend of mine, for she was always very kind to me."

"The Sioux gained a grand victory over the Pawnees the day she was born, and when she was twelve years of age, she had a dream which she told to them, and the old medicine-chief sent them to follow the trail she told them of, and they were successful in a raid they made against the whites."

"She had another dream of ill-omen to them, and they did not believe it, so when their village was attacked and destroyed by soldiers, they began to believe that she was a dream-spirit, and they made her their queen."

"What is her name, Charlie?"

"They call her Singing Dove, uncle, and for an Indian she is a mighty pretty girl, and has as much influence as the chief, Red Hair."

"How she fools them, I don't know, but she springs a dream on them every now and then, and she hits the truth like a bull's eye, every time."

"She told them not to go upon the attack on your train on your way back to Omaha."

"And we beat them badly, but it was through your escaping and warning us of their ambush."

"True, uncle; but they only saw that Singing Dove told them not to go."

"Does not Red Hair make love to her?"

"He would, if she cared for him; but I think she is in love with a young chief who hated Red Hair, and who would have been the ruler of the Sioux but for the white renegade."

"There were other chiefs who feared Red Spirit as a rival, and so they plotted to get rid of him, and, as I told you, he had to fly for his life from his own people, for Red Hair's friends among the braves were the strongest party."

"Something like a political row among the whites, Charlie."

"Yes, sir; only more bitter, I think."

"And on the march to ambush my train they captured this fugitive young chief, Red Spirit, you told me?"

"Yes, sir; his pony had fallen on him, and broken his leg."

"One of his worst foes found him, and so he was sent back a prisoner to the village."

"But ran against you making your escape, and you set the Red Spirit free, after killing his rival and captor."

"Yes, sir, and I only wish Red Spirit was there now, for then we would stand some chance; but, as it is, uncle, I reckon Chief Red Hair will make it very hot for us."

"I should not be surprised, Charlie; but whatever comes take it like a man, for, remember, physical torture can not last long and not kill, and we have but one time to die."

"Never beg to a foe for mercy, or let him rejoice in beholding your sufferings, for it is his pleasure to see you weaken."

"If we have to die, Charlie, we will meet our fate as brave men should, for, boy though you are, you have the heart of a man."

"I'll die game, uncle, never fear," was Dashing Charlie's response, in a tone that showed he meant just what he said.

CHAPTER X.

THE SIOUX STRONGHOLD.

As though fearing that the two captives were plotting mischief, the Sioux warrior in charge of them decided that it would be best to separate them.

He did not like this long-continued conversation between them, for it appeared to bode evil of some kind.

So Charlie was taken on ahead and placed by the side of a warrior, while two braves took Captain Emmett in charge.

The trail led further and further up into the highlands, and became more steep and dangerous as they went along.

It followed the backbone of a rising ridge, and at last penetrated the fastnesses of a large mountain range, where no sane commander would dare follow the retreating Sioux unless he had a force equal to their own.

Places of ambush were upon every side along the trail, and here and there were spots where by simply loosening a shower of stones from above on the mountain-side, they would come crashing down and stampede a whole army, for shelter there was none.

Captain Emmett took the situations in at a glance, and really hoped that the men would be forced to retreat, for as he said to himself:

"If they attempt to rescue us, and come on this trail they are doomed."

At last a basin in the mountain range, fertile, well watered and a natural defense was reached, and Captain Emmett knew that it was the stronghold of the Sioux.

There were already encamped there hundreds of red fugitives, who had fled from their village miles away.

They were seated about their camp-fires in sullen humor, the old braves smoking their pipes, and talking in low tones, while the women and children were keeping silent in this their hour of grief and anger.

The call had come for the young bucks to go to their chief to give their foes battle, but the old men, the youth and the wounded and sick were there, and their humor was fiendish.

As the braves came in with the prisoners there were angry murmurs running from fire to fire, and all eyes were turned upon the man and boy.

The former was not known to them, excepting perhaps a few warriors who had attacked his fur-trains in the past.

But Dashing Charlie had been a captive for some months in their midst, and all knew him.

He had been the Red Hair's favorite they knew, and he had made his escape, and more, it was owing to this that their warriors had been surprised where they meant to surprise, and had thus been badly defeated.

So they scowled at Dashing Charlie in a way that spoke volumes.

But if Charlie felt their angry glances he did not show it, but saluted them with a smile, while he called different ones he recognized by name.

A movement was also made to rush upon the captives, and vent their hatred of the whites by beating them.

But the chief in charge of the red guard at once called out that his orders were to allow no abuse of the prisoners, and he emphasized this by giving a young Indian of sixteen a whack with a stick over the head that sent him howling away, just as he had raised his bow to shoot Captain Emmett for his own gratification.

Other braves closed around the prisoners then, to protect them, and thus Charlie found himself again by his uncle's side.

"These red devils mean mischief, Charlie," said the captain, calmly.

"The guard will protect us, sir."

"If they can, for they are but a score against a thousand."

"It does look black," and as Charlie spoke he skillfully dodged a rock, thrown at him by a squaw, and which, missing its target, took the warrior beyond him full in the breast, knocking him out of his saddle.

As it happened the squaw was the wife of the very brave whom she had so cleverly dismounted, and when he arose from his back there was blood in the eye of her lord and master.

With a yell he rushed upon her, and a blow sent her flying to earth, knocking over in her going another squaw and a child.

Charlie laughed, for he enjoyed the situation, and coming back to his pony the brave cast a savage glance at him for having dodged the blow aimed at him.

This somewhat quieted the excitement for a few minutes, but Captain Emmett saw that trouble was brewing.

Word had spread among the Indians that he was the chief of the fur-traders' train, and they knew him as a man who had dealt many a bitter blow at their race, and escaped their plans to capture him many a time.

Then, too, Dashing Charlie was recalled as one who in their midst had "played Ingin" so well that they had begun to feel that he was going to be like the renegades or white Sioux, when lo! off he goes, heads off the fur-traders' train, and so causes the braves under Red Hair a crushing defeat.

Now he is back among them, and at their mercy.

Protected by the guard it means that the two captives are kept by the chief Red Hair for some purpose of his own, so their chance to get revenge is to seize upon them now and torture them to death.

Evil advisers among the Indians start this idea upon its rounds, and it gains followers at once.

As the guards with their two captives move into the stronghold there are waves of fury running through the excited crowd gathered there, and the two thousand savage voices, envenomed with hatred and cruelty, begin to call for the prisoners to be delivered into their hands.

The guard closes more closely around them, obeying the orders of their great chief, and yet these sea of maddened faces turned up to them causes one and all of the braves to feel how utterly unable they are to stem that wild current.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SINGING DOVE.

DASHING CHARLIE recognized the desperate danger of their situation, as soon as Captain Emmett did.

The old braves, decrepit now, many of them warriors of a hundred battles, where scars could be shown by the dozen, felt their old blood becoming hot under the feeling of revenge upon the two captives.

Youths who were not yet known as warriors, who thirsted to taste blood and "win their spurs," longed to have a hand in the torture and then the death of the man and the boy captives.

Squaws, more cruel and merciless even than the braves, were shrieking for revenge by the killing of the pale-faces.

Then came the children, girls and boys, all anxious to see the pale-faces put to torture.

It was a fearful moment for the captives, and they felt that their guards would weaken under the pressure brought against them.

Where a party of deputies, in civilization, would fire upon a mob composed of their own friends and kindred, when duty demanded the

protection of a prisoner, the red-skin braves, in obedience to the command of the white Sioux chief to guard the captives in safety, would not do so.

No, they could only say that the people demanded the prisoners at their hands and they had to yield them up.

They had halted in the midst of the stronghold, and in their center were the two captives, surrounded yet by the dozen braves who at last tried to protect them.

Around them was a maddened, howling mob of savage humanity, pressing closer and closer to secure their prey.

Captain Emmett was perfectly calm, though his face was pale, his features set with stern resolve to die like the brave man he was.

There, too, was Dashing Charlie, a youth only across the threshold of boyhood, into whose young life had been forced so much of danger and suffering, now showing no dread of the fate that faced him.

He even regarded the howling red fiends with an interest hardly in keeping with the fact that he was the object of their fury.

"I'd like to be unbound, uncle, and have my pair of sixes in my hands," he said in his cool way of talking when in danger.

"Yes, Charlie; then we could carry company with us on our long trail to the happy hunting-grounds," was Captain Emmett's response.

Closer and closer pressed the maddened throng, until at last the warrior guard faltered and began to fall back from around their prisoners.

Another moment and the red-faced and crimson-hearted savages would have been upon the two captives like tigers, to tear them limb from limb, when suddenly a form glided between the two horses ridden by Captain Emmett and Dashing Charlie, and confronted the mob of Indians.

How she got there, for it was a woman, no one seemed to know, for not one had marked her pushing her way through the crowd.

She had come up in the rear of the Indian guard, slipped between the animals ridden by the prisoners, and suddenly stood before the howling Sioux with uplifted hands.

"The pale-face chief and the boy warrior shall not die, for the Singing Dove protects them!" cried the Indian girl, in a voice that all heard.

She held an arrow fitted to a bow in her hand, and covering the hate-frenzied Sioux, whose rush upon the two captives was suddenly checked by her appearance and commanding words.

She who uttered those determined words, putting at defiance an Indian mob of hundreds, was a maiden who had scarcely passed her eighteenth year. Her form was slender, slightly above the medium height, and full of willowy grace, while her carriage was "every inch a queen."

Her complexion was not as dark as the faces about her, and her unloosed hair was not so black. It was very long and of silken texture, not coarse as the locks that covered the heads of her people.

The daughter of a great chief who had fallen in battle against the whites, it was said that the mother of the Singing Dove had been a white maiden who had fled from her cabin home on the border to become the wife of the young Indian brave who had saved her life on one occasion, when some Pawnees held her captive.

Certainly the lighter complexion and silken hair, with the greater beauty of face and form she possessed, would indicate that the mother of the Singing Dove had indeed been a pale-face; but whether a willing bride or unwilling captive of the young Sioux chief, was not known.

The Singing Dove was dressed in the richest of barbarous costumes, and seemed as fond of display as her pale-face sisters of the far East.

Her head-dress was of gorgeously-colored feathers, and her costume was beaded and fringed in a most picturesque fashion, which was the envy of many of her young girl companions.

It was the Singing Dove who so daringly came to the rescue of the two prisoners, and had commanded, in imperative tones, that they should not die at the hands of the Indian horde, now thirsting for a death-feast.

The Sioux all seemed fairly startled at first, and came to a sudden halt.

They glared upon the young girl who barred their way, and now stood defiant and unawed before them.

That the beautiful Sioux Queen should protect Dashing Charley and his uncle, made the savages furious.

At last an old warrior broke the silence, which was becoming keenly painful, as the crowd faced the young Pocahontas of the West.

"Is the heart of the Singing Dove bad that

she says what she does, that the captives shall not be given up to her people?"

All breathlessly awaited the answer to the old brave's demand.

It came in a distinct, undaunted voice, which all heard:

"The Singing Dove's heart it not bad; but she will protect the pale-faces from her people who have murder in their hearts.

"She has spoken, so let her people beware!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE RED ARROW.

So maddened were the warrior horde, old and young, with the two captives who had fallen into their power, that they were not calmed even by the words of the young girl whom they recognized as their queen.

They for once were too wrought up to obey her, and a warrior with a more desperate nature than the others sounded the key-note when he said:

"There is nothing to fear, nothing to beware of.

"We have nothing to fear, for the Singing Dove is a woman.

"The two pale-faces must die."

The Indian brave sprung forward as he spoke, to immediately start back with a look of terror upon his face and a cry of horror.

The look and the cry checked the rush of the others, and all gazed at the Singing Dove in wonder and awe.

In her hand she held a blood-red arrow, shaft, feathers and point.

It was a long arrow and she had slipped it quickly from the folds of her buckskin skirt.

She held it pointed directly at the warrior, and the point touched him on the head.

It did not hurt him, and yet he shrunk from it, while the Indian girl came closer, still holding the arrow-point against his head.

"The Wolf Eye has dared disobey the command of the great chief, Red Hair, and he has defied the Singing Dove's warning.

"The Singing Dove touches the Wolf Eye with the point of the red arrow, and it means death!

"The Wolf Eye knows what it means, as all my people do.

"The Wolf Eye heeded not the warning, and he must die."

There was a deathlike silence now upon all.

A spell seemed to have fallen upon the hate-maddened savages, for they were as quiet as the grave.

Captain Emmett and Dashing Charlie looked on in wonder, amazed at the sudden calming of the furious passions of the fierce red warriors, and at her wonderful power over that savage horde.

There stood, or rather crouched the Sioux brave who had defied her, and over him she bent with the Red Arrow resting upon his bushy head.

He was a young buck of twenty, who had made some reputation for himself.

He had sought to win the heart of the Singing Dove, but had failed to influence her.

Now he was to feel what it was to face a woman scorned, even though that woman was an Indian maiden.

He felt the terror of his situation in all it implied, for he knew that, touched by that Red Arrow in the hands of the irate Singing Dove, there would be no mercy shown him.

Life to him had been all that his proud spirit could hope to make it, and now he stepped across the threshold of death so suddenly that it almost unnerved even his brave nature.

"What does it mean, Charlie, for you are posted in their secret signs I guess?" whispered Captain Emmett to Dashing Charlie.

The boy answered in the same low tone.

"The Red Arrow I have never before seen, uncle, but it is said to be death if pointed at an Indian, by a chief."

"And the girl has the power of a chief, I suppose?"

"She has even more, sir, for Red Hair, I believe, is the only one whom she is forced to obey."

"Well, she is our friend, Charlie."

"I told you that she would be, sir."

"Yes, but those people are growing uneasy and may break out anew."

"They dare not incur the Red Arrow's touch, uncle; I feel sure of that."

"But, she cannot point it at all of them—bucks, squaws and children; and see! they are all getting uneasy as cats in a strange garret."

"She will protect us, sir, now that she has made up her mind to do so."

"A mere girl against hundreds of infuriated

savages, Charlie, can do nothing, no matter how good her intention to serve us."

"You have just seen the power of the Singing Dove over Wolf Eye, uncle."

"Yes, she has silenced him like a spiked gun. I only hope she can silence the other; but see! she notes that they are becoming excited again, and is about to speak."

It was true that the crowd was becoming excited once more; voices were heard here and there, and it seemed as though the doom visited upon the Indian brave, Wolf Eye, had not been waxing sufficient to check the rapid flow of bad blood in the veins of all.

CHAPTER XIII. THE SACRED ARROW.

THE Wolf Eye still crouched before the Singing Dove, as though not daring to move without her consent.

At last, as she saw that the Indian braves, urged on by the squaws, still meant mischief, said:

"Let the Wolf Eye go to the death tepee and await the coming of the hour when he must start on the trail to the happy hunting-grounds, where, because he has defied the queen of his people, he must dwell as a squaw man, not as a brave."

The young brave shuddered at her words, and a murmur ran through the crowd.

But the Wolf Eye straightened himself up, drew his blanket around to cover his face, as though in shame at his fate, and never for an instant thinking of disobeying the decree of the young girl, strode away with despair clutching at his heart—a despair that was terrible to witness.

The Indians meanwhile had pressed closer to the young girl and the captives.

The guard, emboldened by the act of the Singing Dove, once more drew around their prisoners; but the wild howls of savage humanity was not to be quelled in their turbulence so easily; they considered the doom of the Wolf Eye as another and stronger reason for hatred against the captives.

But for them the Wolf Eye would not have been touched by the Red Arrow.

So the squaws uttered a series of shrieks which ended in a cry for the captives' death.

It was answered by the cracked voices of the old warriors, and echoed by the shrill tones of the children.

"We are goners, Charlie," muttered Captain Emmett, in despair.

"I don't give up yet, uncle, for the Singing Dove has got the will of a chief and is plucky as any of the warriors."

"I hope she'll touch up that old squaw, who is howling so, with her arrow next time."

"Yes, I could point out a number of them if she asked my advice, that the village would be the quieter for getting rid of."

"But, I never saw a handsomer Indian girl, Charlie."

"No, uncle; but see! they are moving upon us."

It was true: the wild mob of red-skins was again crowding upon the prisoners; but the Indian girl stood her ground, not wavering or yielding an inch.

On came the howling horde once more, and then came the words, clear and ringing:

"Will not my people heed?"

A howling chorus was the answer.

"My people have seen the fate of the Wolf Eye."

But they evidently supposed that there were not red arrows enough to go around for all, and they howled the louder and pushed on.

Then the arm of the young Indian maiden dropped quickly to her side, her hand was thrust into the folds of her buckskin skirt, and quickly it was raised.

The Red Arrow had disappeared, but, instead, in her hand was grasped a snow-white one, feathers and all!

This she quickly raised, and springing between the horse upon which Captain Emmett and Dashing Charlie were mounted, the Singing Dove touched the head of each captive with the point of the long, snowy arrow, while she cried:

"I thus protect these pale-faces from my people!"

Again a deathlike silence fell upon the madened throng. All became as still as though they had been struck a death-blow.

"What did it mean?" the astonished captain asked of Charlie, who responded:

"That is the Sacred Arrow, uncle. We are safe now."

"I am not sorry to hear it; but what does it mean?"

Before Charlie could reply the Singing Dove broke the silence in her clear, musical voice, in which, however, there was a tremor now, as though she felt fully the responsibility she assumed:

"My people will respect the pledge of the White Arrow. It is sacred, and I have touched with its point these pale-face captives. Dare any Sioux disobey the command, now, of the Singing Dove?"

She faced them fearlessly, and not a word came in answer.

Those in the outer edge of the crowd began to back out and glide away. Others followed one by one; then in groups the Sioux all began to disperse.

Even the old hags were calmed, and the children became subdued.

The White Arrow had worked some miracle, it seemed, for it was literally like oil on storm-riven waters.

The Singing Dove gazed upon the disappearing mob until only the guard remained who had brought the prisoners in.

Then she turned toward them, replaced the White Arrow, and drew forth the Red Arrow once more.

The stalwart warriors grew terribly uneasy at her act.

CHAPTER XIV. PROTECTED.

It seemed that the Singing Dove had drawn the Red Arrow once more for some deep purpose.

The two were suspended to her waist by a buckskin string, and hidden under the beaded skirt she wore.

No one had seemed to suspect that she carried them with her, and had she not done so the captives realized that they would at that moment have been undergoing the most terrible of tortures.

There sat the Indian guard of the captives upon their horses, and they were very nervous under the gaze of the Indian girl.

At last she spoke, and what she said made them wince in spite of their stoicism.

"The Singing Dove sees before her braves who are not men, who are unworthy to be called warriors."

"They were given these captives by the great Chief Red Hair to protect, and they failed to do so."

"They had squaw hearts when they should have been men."

"It is in the heart of the Singing Dove to rid the village of such weak braves."

"It is in her heart to send them to join the Wolf Eye in the Death Lodge."

She paused here, and with the evident intentions of making the braves believe she intended to touch them with the fatal Red Arrow.

She waved it about in what seemed to them a very reckless manner.

Not one of them spoke, and all seemed to expect their doom to be that of the Wolf Eye.

So the Indian maiden allowed them to feel for full a minute, a minute of oppressive silence.

Then she spoke again and her words were Balm of Gilead to the hearts of the warrior guards.

"The Singing Dove's heart is not bad, for she loves her people."

"She will not make her braves feel that she is cruel."

"They should have protected the captives, should have obeyed the command of the Red Hair though they lost their lives."

"The Singing Dove knows well that they did not wish to strike at the heart of their own people and she forgives them."

"The Sacred White Arrow has protected the pale-faces, and let the braves take them to the Medicine Lodge of the great chief Snow Head, and have them there in his keeping until the coming of the Red Hair."

"The braves have heard the words of the Singing Dove."

It was very evident that the braves heard her words with much pleasure and felt a decided relief when they saw her drop the Red Arrow out of sight alongside of where the White Arrow hung.

They did not speak, but made a sign by placing their hands over their eyes and bowing their heads, in token that they were in darkness before the light of her words and obeyed her with reverence.

But as they were about to move away with the prisoners, Dashing Charlie called out:

"I say, Singing Dove, you are a dandy, and I thank you for what you have done for me and Uncle Emmett."

The Indian girl spoke English fairly well, and though she might not have understood first how

great a compliment Charlie had intended in calling her a "dandy," knew instinctively that he was saying something very kind of her.

She smiled therefore in response, but did not speak.

Then Captain Emmett spoke, and warmly:

"My dear girl, I do not believe you are all Indian, for you have a heart."

"You have saved our lives, and I appreciate what you have done, as I shall endeavor to show, if we ever get out of the wilderness alive, which is doubtful, for the gang which have gone out to whip my men and the soldiers, will come back very badly licked, and the humor they will be in a catamount would envy."

"I thank you, fair Singing Dove, from my inmost heart."

Again the Indian girl smiled, but did not speak, and wheeling upon her heel walked away toward her own tepee.

The guard, meanwhile, rode off with the captives to the upper end of the stronghold, where, upon a ledge of rock was a large skin tepee painted all over with strange Indian devices.

Before the open tepees sat an Indian of majestic appearance, for his long hair was as white as snow.

His form was very large, though not bent by years, and his face was massive in feature, and seemed deeply with care.

His eyes were deep sunken under shaggy brows, and very bright in their glance.

The dress of this old Indian patriarch was of buckskin, painted black and yellow, and he was almost weighted down with the necklaces he wore, while upon his head was a bonnet of jet-black feathers, excepting one of scarlet, immediately in front.

He eyed the guard as they came up, watched them dismount and lead their prisoners up to the ledge, where they halted and waited for the old medicine-man to speak.

At last he said in a deep, basso voice:

"My young warriors bring captives of the pale-face race to the Snow Head?"

The leader of the guard of braves then told his story, and added that the prisoners had been touched by the Sacred Arrow, and were sent by the Singing Dove to the Snow Head to protect.

"The Snow Head will protect them," was the response of the old chief, and the braves turned and left the prisoners in his keeping.

CHAPTER XV.

A PROPHECY FULFILLED.

"WELL, Charlie, we are better off here with this old Indian gentleman than we would be left with the guard, for my idea is that we can tie him up and make our escape."

So said Captain Emmett as the guard rode away, and he glanced at the Sioux patriarch.

But a warning look upon the face of the boy checked his further words, and Charley whispered:

"Uncle, the medicine-chief I have heard speak English with Chief Red Hair, while every pass of this stronghold is guarded, and except by the passes we could not get away, even on foot."

"We will have to wait for a better chance to escape, sir, for you may be sure that though the guard left us here they are on the watch, and will be secretly all night."

"I think you are right, Charlie; but keep your eyes open for all that may turn up to our advantage."

"I will do so, sir."

The medicine-chief had entered his large tepee after the arrival of the prisoners, and now came out and confronted them.

They had been ordered to dismount by their guards and their horses were led away.

Their weapons had been handed over to the medicine-chief, who had carried them into the tepee.

Bound securely as they were there seemed no possibility of escape, unless the old medicine-man untied their hands to allow them to partake of food.

Charlie had been to the stronghold with Red Hair, when he was his prisoner before, and he knew it pretty well, and that to attempt to escape from there was out of the question then.

The medicine-chief glanced at them fixedly for a while and then said to Dashing Charlie:

"The Snow Head knows the face of the little brave."

"Yes, I was here before," answered Dashing Charlie indifferently, while Captain Emmett realized that the old Indian did speak English well.

"The little pale-face went away from his red brothers and fought with the pale-faces against them?" continued the old chief.

"You bet I did, Chief Snow Head, for I am no

renegade against my own people," was the prompt response of Dashing Charlie.

"The little brave is a bad Indian."

"Maybe, but a good pale-face."

Snow Head looked very solemn, and then turned to the captain and gazed unflinchingly into his eyes.

"The Snow Head sees the blood of Sioux braves upon the hand of the pale-face chief."

"You've got pretty good eyes to see what you say, chief, though I do not deny having protected my scalp at sundry times, when your warriors have attacked me."

"The white chief and the little brave came to the Sioux village to kill my people, to rob them and to run off our ponies."

"We came to rescue the white captives you had here, chief."

"Well, they will be brought back, and my warriors will return with many scalps, and arms and horses."

"The great chief Red Hair is on the trail of the pale-face warriors and they will soon kill them."

"You are 'way off the right trail, chief, in that prophecy of yours."

"The white chief does not see what the Snow Head sees, and he believes that he speaks with a crooked tongue," and the old Indian spoke in anger.

"I prophesy, Chief Snow Head, that your braves will come back on the jump, and there will be wailing and weeping in your village, with a remarkable scarcity of white scalps, which you all love so well."

"The white chief is a fool."

"Perhaps; but the men who came here with me were not born in the woods to be scared by an owl, and you chalk down my prophecy that your warriors will get worsted when they rush upon my men, for there are good commanders there, if I have turned up missing."

The old Indian seemed indignant at the thought of his braves being worsted, as Captain Emmett predicted.

He had been kept well posted of the fight in the village, and that the Rescuers had retreated, leaving their captain and Dashing Charlie in the hands of the Sioux.

He had been told that Chief Red Hair had gathered all his warriors to follow and throw himself upon the pale-face band and wipe them out, and he could not believe in defeat to his side.

But the next morning the stronghold was aroused at dawn by wounded warriors coming into camp, and they were singing a requiem for their dead comrades.

The story was soon told of how they had brought the Rescuers to bay, and in what they deemed the moment of triumph, the soldiers had come to their relief, and, after a fierce battle, the Sioux had been forced to fly.

The prophecy of Captain Emmett had been fulfilled.

CHAPTER XVI.

AFTER THE BATTLE.

THE retreating Sioux arrived at the stronghold in squads.

First came a band of wounded, and they brought with them a few dead, for the Sioux always take their slain from a field if it can be done.

A chorus of wild yells and wails went up at sight of the dead, and the whole stronghold was a scene impossible to describe.

Other wounded came in, and then warriors on foot and on horseback, men and ponies utterly worn out.

At last the main band came in and took position to fight to the last, to defend the stronghold against their foes, whom they believed to be in pursuit.

But hours passed away and there was a feeling of relief as the soldiers did not appear.

Scouts were sent out and soon returned with the report that there was not an enemy within many miles, that they only made a show of pursuit and had then retreated themselves.

Wild yells of delight broke out at this, but they were soon silenced by the wails over the many dead who had never returned.

"The Sioux have not whipped the soldiers, as you prophesied, Chief Snow Head, but have instead, gotten a severe punishment," said Captain Emmett, as he surmised the truth, from the warriors who came to the Medicine Lodge and held an earnest conversation with the aged chief.

"The pale-faces have been terribly whipped, they are in full flight and their scalps are at the belts of my young warriors," answered the

medicine-chief in a tone intended to be triumphant.

"Charlie?"

"Yes, uncle."

"What a healthy old liar this medicine-man is," said Captain Emmett.

"He certainly is," was Dashing Charlie's reply, while Captain Emmett could not omit retorting:

"Your braves seem little like victors, chief, and I have yet to see one of them show a fresh scalp."

Old Snow Head looked positively wicked at this and muttered something to himself.

"Uncle?"

"Yes, Charlie."

"I don't believe there are any cuss-words in the Indian tongue, but if there are the old chief was using them just now."

Captain Emmett laughed, and then turned his gaze upon a horseman who was approaching.

He was riding rapidly and his horse showed the evidence of having been hard pressed.

He sat his horse splendidly and was dressed half as an Indian, half in the costume of a frontiersman.

A glance was sufficient to show that he was not an Indian, though his face was hideously disfigured with war-paint, in yellow, black and red.

He rode up near to the ledge and dismounting walked on up to the medicine-tepee.

"It is the chief Red Hair, uncle," said Dashing Charlie.

"I supposed so, and now I can get a look at that red-handed renegade," and Captain Emmett fixed his eyes upon him with deepest interest.

"Now we will know what is to become of us," added Dashing Charlie.

As though not hearing the words, Captain Emmett said:

"He is a superbly formed man, walks like a soldier, and it is a pity to see such a person become what he is."

The chief meanwhile had walked up the trail to the ledge, where he was met by old Snow Head, who greeted him with the deference due his superior.

"Let the medicine-chief hear what I have to tell," said Red Hair sternly, as he sat down upon a rustic seat near the tepee with but a glance at the prisoners, who were tied to a tree near by.

He spoke in the Sioux tongue, and Dashing Charlie's ears were wide open to note what he would say.

"The ears of the Snow Head are open," was the response of the aged medicine-man.

"The pale-faces came to attack our village, and they were in numbers like the trees in the forest."

"We beat them off at last, but not until they had destroyed our village, carried off our property, run off our ponies and secured the captives that we held, while many of our warriors fell under their deadly fire."

"We have retreated to our stronghold here, and I have come to talk with the Snow Head, to hold council with him, as I know that he holds for me two prisoners, one the chief of the pale-faces who came to fight us, the other the white boy whom we held prisoner for so long a while, and who escaped us."

"Yes, we have them here, for the eyes of the great chief Red Hair rests on them."

"And they shall die, Chief Snow Head, they shall die by the cruellest tortures that you can arrange for them," savagely said the renegade chief.

"No, they are not to die, for they have been touched by the Sacred White Arrow," responded the old chief impressively.

CHAPTER XVII.

THWARTED.

THE face of the renegade chief grew black with rage, as he heard the words of the old medicine-chief.

He had sent his two captives to the stronghold, for a purpose the reader is aware of.

It was not his intention to kill them, unless he was unable to force from them the secret of where the mine of Nick Nye was located.

He wished them to feel, however, that his intention was to torture them to death, and so he had said what he did, hoping Dashing Charlie knew enough of the Indian tongue to understand what he said to the old medicine-man and thus be able to tell his uncle.

What had occurred after the arrival of the prisoners at the stronghold, he had not yet heard.

He had been too busy arranging his braves against attack, should the soldiers be in heavier force than reported, or be reinforced and follow to the stronghold.

At last he had a short rest, and asking for the prisoners was told that they were at the Medicine Lodge of Snow Head.

Springing upon his horse, he had ridden there, to discover them seated under a tree, and bound, while the medicine-chief seemed alone to be doing duty as their guard.

To his amazement he was now told by the medicine-chief that the captives were under the protection of the Sacred White Arrow.

He could hardly believe his own ears.

Had the medicine-chief dared do this?

If not, who else had been so bold as to thwart him in his intentions regarding his prisoners?

Like thunder came his words, as it dawned upon him that the medicine-chief spoke the truth, and he let his hands fall heavily upon the shoulders of the aged Indian:

"Under the protection of the Sacred White Arrow, you say?"

"The Snow Head has spoken," was the calm rejoinder of the old Indian.

"Who has dared do this thing?" came the next question of the chief.

"Let the chief Red Hair seek the Singing Dove, for she sent the prisoner pale-faces to the Medicine Lodge."

"Ha! that red-skin girl has dared do this, to defy me?"

"I remember now she was always kind to the boy."

"By the Great Spirit! but I shall destroy the power she holds for this act of defiance of me."

The last words were uttered more to himself than to the medicine-chief.

Charlie had listened to all, and he had mastered what was said most thoroughly, and repeated to his uncle in a low tone just how the situation stood.

"The girl will defy him, for she is just the one to do it, and she will be the master in the end, if he fights her fair," said Captain Emmett.

"Which he will not do, uncle," was Charlie's low rejoinder.

Then he added:

"See, he is to pitch into us now."

As Charlie spoke the renegade chief advanced toward them.

He walked straight up to where they sat, bound to a tree, and said with a sneer, addressing Dashing Charlie:

"Well, boy, we meet again?"

"I am sorry to say that we do," was Charlie's remark, in return.

"You played a clever trick on me, boy, in making your escape from my village."

"I played to win, chief, as I had no idea of turning Indian to please you."

"Yes, and you will be an Indian ere you again join your white friends, mark my words."

"I thought you were going to kill me."

"So I am, if you do not do as I tell you."

"But this is your uncle, the fur-trader?"

"It is my uncle, Captain Emmett, yes."

"And my prisoner?"

"So it seems, chief," and Captain Emmett smiled.

"My warriors have long tried to kill you, Captain Emmett, and failed."

"That is because they did not go the right way about it, Renegade Red Hair, for I am human like any other man."

"And you are now in my power!"

"So it seems."

"You and your dearly loved nephew!"

"Yes."

"Well, I have a certain work for you to do, and do this well and I will set you free."

"What is it?"

"I will tell you later."

"Does my freedom include that of my boy?"

"No."

"Then no power can force me to do aught to save my life and leave him in jeopardy."

"You cannot aid him by remaining here."

"That may be."

"Free, you can save your life."

"And a prisoner I can suffer, and if need be, die with my brave boy here."

"Well, we may come to terms upon his freedom as well as your own."

"It will be the only way we can come to terms, chief, mark my words on that, for I mean every word I utter," said Captain Emmett, and the renegade felt that he would be as good as his word, and he ground his teeth with rage as he remembered that he had been thwarted by the act of the Singing Dove.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE WHITE SIOUX MAKES A VISIT.

THE renegade chief paced to and fro for a moment in silence, his face and manner showing that he was in deadly earnest in what he was meditating, and also deeply moved from some reason.

The Indians were wild with their grief and defeat, and but for the fact that the warriors had said the courage and skill of their renegade chief alone saved them when the soldiers came to the attack, they would have turned against their white allies in their fury.

After some minutes of silently pacing to and fro the chief turned away with the remark:

"See to it, Chief Snow Head, that these prisoners are here when I want them."

"The Snow Head knows his duty," was the dignified answer of the old Indian.

"Then don't fail in it," was the sharp retort, and speaking in English, the White Sioux said to Captain Emmett:

"I will see the Singing Dove, and then I will know what to do with you two."

Captain Emmett made no reply, but Dashing Charlie called out:

"Don't forget, Chief Red Hair, that your warriors under your lead have just been badly whipped, and white renegades might lose their influence very suddenly now, if they go too far."

The white Sioux muttered an oath, while Captain Emmett smiled and said:

"You hit him that time, Charlie, and it would not surprise me if you were right, that the Indians might rise against their white allies, after their crushing defeat from the soldiers and our men."

"In which case the Singing Dove would rule, uncle."

"Yes, but I doubt if she could check the mad mob once they tasted white blood here in their stronghold, and we would have to go."

"But see the white Sioux ride."

The renegade had descended from the ledge, mounted his horse and was dashing furiously along toward the tepee of the Singing Dove at the other end of the stronghold.

As has been said, the stronghold was a village, a safe retreat, and there were some Indian families who dwelt there all the time, while large quantities of their goods were kept there for need, should they be pressed to retreat rapidly from their home among the foot-hills.

Having come there often to camp, as it was their winter retreat, all the Indian families had their regular homes, and they had their tepees set up and camp-fires burning, so that all looked as though they had not rushed in a short while before in the fear of defeat.

The Sioux were wailing most dismally, and the scene and sounds were appalling in the gathering darkness, for the valley was lighted up now by a hundred or more camp fires.

Women wailed, children cried, while warriors now and then would join in a chorus of savage yells, to which the numerous dogs in the camp howled in sympathy.

But the white Sioux long stay among the Indians had accustomed him to just such scenes, after a defeat, and he unheeded all in his ride toward the tepee of the Singing Dove.

This was located by itself at the upper end of the valley.

It was in a little canyon, surrounded by steep sides and terminating abruptly a couple of hundred yards from the entrance.

A secluded and safe retreat it was for the young girl, and there she dwelt alone in her large tepee, which was a finer one than even the renegade chief's.

Her two ponies, one snow-white, the other jet-black, grazed in the canyon, at the mouth of which, on either side, were camped two Indian families, relatives of Singing Dove, and by their presence there seeming as a kind of a guard for her, though none was needed in reality.

Up to the mouth of the canyon dashed the renegade chief, and dismounting he called an Indian boy to hold his horse.

Even the white Sioux dared not invade the canyon of the queen on horseback, or go to her tepee without sending word to the Singing Dove that he would see her.

An old squaw took his message, that he wished to see the Sioux Queen, and she could guess why, for she had been at the scene where the young Indian girl had protected Red Hair's two captives with the sacred arrows.

The chief paced to and fro impatiently across the canyon, until the return of the squaw, who said:

"The Singing Dove is in her nest, and will see the great chief."

Then on strode the white Sioux up the canyon, and reaching the tepee found there the Indian girl, seated upon a grizzly bear robe, dressed in her best costume, and with a robe of white beaver-skins* thrown over her shoulders.

CHAPTER XIX.

DUPED.

THE red renegade had gone to see the Singing Dove in a very angry mood.

He was well versed in every Indian custom, and he knew that the Red Arrow point laid upon any one by the hands of one in authority, condemned him or her to death, for he had used this means of getting rid of several who had been in his way.

He knew as well the protecting virtues of the White Arrow.

But why the Singing Dove had made use of the latter, to protect the two captives from him, he did not understand, and the fact had angered and worried him.

So it was that his manner was angry his eyes flashing when he approached the Indian girl.

The white blood that coursed in her veins showed itself in her surroundings, for her tepee, or tepees, for there were three of them, one very large one in front, and two smaller ones in the rear communicating, were fitted up snugly and with taste.

One was a sitting-room and in here was a Spanish guitar, some books, several rustic chairs and other things which had been her mother's belongings, and which she had been taught the use of.

The tepee to her right was her sleeping-room, and there was a cot-bed there, with the finest of furs and clothing.

The third tepee was a kitchen and eating place in bad weather, for when the sun shone there was a fire built outside and a table near it.

The squaws of the camp at the mouth of the canyon served the young Sioux Queen well, the warriors brought her game and other food and the children kept her supplied with wood.

A blast on a bugle hanging in her tepee would call assistance at once, and for company she had a couple of fine dogs and her ponies.

Seated upon her grizzly bear skin, and covered with her sacred robe of white beaver-skins, the Indian Queen looked very dignified and her appearance checked the angry words that came to the lips of the renegade chief.

He knew that she had received him not as the Singing Dove, but as the Sioux Queen, as the white beaver and grizzly bear robes indicated.

Then, too, she had on her war-bonnet, that of a full chief of her people.

To be ugly toward her would lose him his influence in an instant with her people, he was well aware of.

So he said, after quickly making the sign of respectful greeting due her:

"The Singing Dove has acted as chief, it seems, while the Red Hair was away fighting her battles for her."

"And fighting his own, for had not the Red Hair defended himself, he would have lost his scalp," was the quiet response.

"The Red Hair has saved the people from utter ruin and death," he boasted.

"Had the Red Hair not been so self-satisfied with the safety of the lower village and had his scouts out, the pale-faces would never have reached us to attack our homes."

Under this the Red Hair winced, and seeing her advantage, Singing Dove continued:

"The warning of danger came just in time to save us, and from the Red Scalper, a pale-face brother."

"The Red Hair fought our foes and was beaten back, his warriors slain, and many scalps lost."

"The Singing Dove was not there to see the number of our foes, and how well my braves fought."

"The Singing Dove was here, and in the absence of Red Hair she rules her people."

"And she has protected two of the Red Hair's prisoners with a touch of the Sacred White Arrow."

"Yes, she has done so, and more."

"Ah! and what more?"

"She has doomed the Wolf Eye, by a touch of the red arrow, to death."

"By the Great Spirit, girl, but the Wolf Eye is one of my best young warriors, and must not die."

"The Wolf Eye must die," was the calm response of the Indian girl.

* The white beaver is a sacred animal among the Sioux.

THE AUTHOR.

"Did the Singing Dove touch the Wolf Eye with the red arrow?"

"She did."

"And why?"

"She warned him and he defied her."

"When?"

"Yesterday, when she gave the protection of the Sacred White Arrow to the two pale-faces."

"And why was this?"

"The Singing Dove does not ask the motives of the Red Hair for his deeds, and he shall not question what she deems her duty."

"Is this the answer of the Singing Dove to the head chief of her people?"

"The Singing Dove has spoken."

"And she defies me?"

"The Singing Dove does not fear the Red Hair, and she knows her duty to her people," was the calm reply.

CHAPTER XX.

AN EXCEPTION IN THE LAWS OF THE SIOUX.

RED HAIR the renegade saw that there was nothing to gain in a war of words with the beautiful Indian girl.

He had made a mistake, he realized, in coming to her in anger.

He had secretly asked her to be his wife, on several occasions, and been firmly refused, and it was he who had plotted to get rid of the young chief Red Spirit, whom he had felt that she loved, and in this he was successful, for he had been the means of sending him away from his people a fugitive.

Why he had not been brought in by the other lover of the Singing Dove, who had found him in a lone camp with his leg broken, the Red Hair could not understand.

But the body of his rival had been found, and the crippled prisoner was gone, so it was supposed that he had mastered his guard and fled.

That Dashing Charlie, in his escape, had come upon the two, killed the guard and set the fugitive chief free the Red Hair did not suspect.

Now he found himself the antagonist of the Sioux Queen, and so he changed his manner at once, determined to use other means than commands to gain his ends.

"The Red Hair is wrong to be angry, for the Singing Dove has a right to do as she did; but will she tell him why she protected the two white captives?"

"The Singing Dove was told by the guard of warriors that the Red Hair had sent them to the stronghold, and they were not to be harmed."

"That was true."

"My people were mad, their heads were on fire with anger, their hearts wicked, and they wished to seize the two prisoners from the guard and torture them to death."

"Ah! but could not the guard protect them?"

"Not from thousands of mad people."

"Did they not tell them the wishes of the Red Hair?"

"What cared the people then for the Red Hair's wishes?"

"And then?"

"The Wolf Eye was warned by me and disobeyed, and I doomed him by a touch of the Red Arrow point."

"Now I understand."

"But the prisoners?"

"The people were quiet for a moment, and then rushed toward the captives once more, when I touched them with the White Arrow."

"And the Singing Dove did right, for I would not have had those two die, at least not until I have done with them."

"But the Singing Dove must yield me the right to put them to death when I please, for she has the power to do so."

"The Singing Dove will not do so."

"What! will she still protect these prisoners, and from the head chief of the people?"

"The Singing Dove respects the head chief, the white Sioux."

"She believes him to be a Sioux at heart, and he has done much for her people; but she has protected his prisoners with the touch of the White Arrow, and she will not say now that they shall die."

"But if I demand it?"

"It is of no use, the prisoners shall not die."

In vain did the renegade plead with her to give him the right to kill them, if he found it necessary to do so in his opinion, for she was as firm as a rock, and would not yield her position.

She had protected the prisoners, and though her word could raise the spell, at the will of the head chief, she would not say it, and her protection of them should still hold good.

At last, again in an ugly mood, the chief mounted his horse and rode away.

Back to his own quarters he went now, and heard the reports of scouts coming in.

He smiled grimly when he learned that the soldiers had retreated, and were not pressing on toward the stronghold.

But he sent out others, to be sure that it was not a ruse of the pale-faces, and then returned to the Medicine Lodge, where he had left the prisoners.

He sought old Snow Head at once, and placed the situation before him, telling him just the stand taken by the Singing Dove.

The aged chief listened attentively, and then was lost in deep thought.

"How can we get around this, Snow Head?" asked the renegade.

He knew that the old medicine-man was the sage of the tribe, that he knew every law, superstition and legend by heart, and if there was a getting-out place from the act of the Singing Dove he would know how to go about it.

At last, after a time so long that the renegade showed his impatience, the medicine-man said:

"The prisoners were captured by the Red Hair?"

"Yes."

"Not by your warriors?"

"No, I seized the bridle-rein of the man, while the Red Scalper captured the boy."

"Then the man you can claim, for the Sioux law is that a prisoner taken by the head chief cannot be protected against the will of that chief."

"Good! then Captain Emmett, at least, is at my mercy by this exception in the Sioux laws," cried the renegade triumphantly.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE RENEGADE'S DEMAND.

The renegade chief seemed pleased at what he learned from the old medicine-man.

He could triumph over the Sioux Queen, and he could have Captain Emmett wholly at his mercy, to kill him if he did not come to his terms.

As for the boy he did not care so much, but was determined to bring him to terms also in the end.

He decided to let the prisoners rest until the morrow, so went to his tepee, and from thence on a round of the sentinels.

After his return he retired to rest, for he was utterly worn out with his loss of sleep and hard work.

The Indians kept up their wailing until nearly dawn, and at sunrise began again.

But the renegade chief slept on until he was awakened by the Red Scalper.

That the latter had brought the news of the meditated attack the warriors knew, and Scalper Sam, or the Red Scalper as he was called by the Indians, was very glad to find himself much respected by the tribe with whom he had cast his lot, by turning renegade to his own people.

"Well, Scalper Sam, what is it?" asked Red Hair, as his ally and lieutenant entered his tepee the following morning.

"You are late in rising, chief."

"Yes, I was worn out; but has anything gone wrong?"

"No, for I have just returned from the trail, and the soldiers have retreated to their respective posts."

"And Emmett's men?"

"Have returned to Omaha, doubtless believing their captain and the boy dead."

"Good! but they were in heavier force than you said?"

"Oh, no, only the Rescuers were hard to fight, and the soldiers came upon the three different trails by forced marches and arrived nearly at the same time."

"We doubled them in numbers easily, only they cannot frighten our braves and set them to flying."

"That the soldiers were not in heavy force is shown by their quick retreat."

"Well, as they retreated instead of pressing us here, we must prove that ours was the victory, Sam."

"Yes, the Indians must be made to see it in that light, and so their wailing can be turned to rejoicing."

The renegade chief had now dressed himself, and he went out to the rustic table and seat where he ate his meals and did the work devolving upon him as chief, when the weather was fine.

A squaw had his breakfast ready for him, and it was a good one, for he constantly got supplies from the posts through his spies.

There was a cup of coffee, some wheat or hoe, cake, bacon and a boiled venison steak.

Scalper Sam ate breakfast with him, saying nothing of having performed that, to him, cheerful duty before that morning.

Then the two mounted their horses and rode toward the medicine-lodge of old Snow Head.

The camp was in great excitement at the death of the warriors, but as he neared the scene of the confusion the renegade chief made known that Scalper Sam had just arrived from the fort and the soldiers and bordermen were in full flight, loaded down with their dead and wounded, the Sioux braves having driving them like a herd of deer before a pack of wolves.

Thus the key-note was started and the howls of sorrow were tuned up to be notes of gladness, and the whole village soon rung with rejoicing at the great victory over the pale-faces, for so the renegade chief had put it.

Arriving at the Medicine Lodge the two renegades found the prisoners still secured to the tree.

They were taking it as calmly as circumstances would permit, and eyed the renegades with an air of perfect indifference.

The old chief met them and bade them welcome.

It would take a second glance to see that the two men were whites, so hideously painted were their faces; but a closer look revealed the long red curls of the chief, and the dark locks of Scalper Sam were too silken in texture for an Indian's hair.

Dismounting they advanced toward the prisoners and sat down upon a log.

"Well, Captain Emmett, I have come to have a talk with you," began the renegade chief.

"I am sorry of it, for I do not care to talk with one so vile as to turn his hand against his own race and out-Indian a red-skin in cruelty," was the quiet response of the fur-trader.

"Well, the Indians I have learned are my friends, the whites are my foes, and I go with those who befriend me."

"The whites are your foes because you are a born cut-throat and villain."

"I came not here to argue my character with you, sir, but to make a demand upon you."

"Well, what is it?"

"You know where lies the gold mine of Nick Nye, who died in your quarters at Omaha?"

"Granted that I do for the sake of argument."

"I demand that you direct me how to find it, or guide me there, in return for your being set free."

"If I decline?"

"You shall die," was the savage answer.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE REFUSAL.

CAPTAIN EMMETT did not flinch under the severe words of the renegade chief.

He simply smiled and said:

"Did you ever consider, renegade, that there was but one time to die?"

"I can make you die a thousand deaths."

"Yes, by torture you can make me long to die and be glad when the life is leaving the body."

"But you do not know me if you believe you can force me to betray a trust."

"What trust?"

"You demand to know where Nick Nye's mine is?"

"Yes."

"You demand that I shall guide you there?"

"I do."

"Well, I refuse."

"Why?"

"Because it was a secret given me by a dying man."

"And you intend to keep it for yourself?"

"In part, yes."

"And the rest?"

"Goes to his mother and sister who are his heirs."

"Did he so direct?"

"Yes."

"He has no kindred."

"He has."

"How do you know?"

"I have his confession."

"It was a false one."

"Dying men do not lie, renegade."

"You believe what he told you?"

"I know it to be true."

"How so?"

"I have in my possession letters from his mother and sister to him."

"Ah, what do they amount to?"

"And from them to me."

"I do not believe you."

"What do I care what you believe, or not?"

"And he left his money to them?"

"He left half to them and half to myself, for I was to find the mine and get from it the best results."

"Where are these papers you speak of?"

"Safe from your clutches."

"Does the mine pay?"

"It will, from all accounts, pay most liberally indeed."

"Well, all I have to say to you is that this expedition of yours up here was to get to that mine under the protection of the military, and you have failed, while the soldiers have been badly defeated, and are flying for their lives back to the settlements, leaving you in my power."

"The only thing true in your assertion, Renegade Red Hair, is that you have me in your power, for my men beat you off, and then you were badly whipped by the soldiers, who have retreated as they were not strong enough to come on here until their reinforcements arrived, which will enable them to—"

"Ha! are there more coming on?"

"You did not speak of this, Scalper Sam?" and the chief grew excited.

Captain Emmett laughed, while he said:

"It shows how little you are posted, how swiftly you fled from the field, when I can give you such a scare."

"Why, man, if you had defeated the soldiers you would never have left off trailing them while there was hope of a scalp, and your people would have returned to their lower village, instead of hiding here, where every warrior you have is here to defend you against attack."

"Weeping and wailing is not a sign of rejoicing, renegade."

The chief uttered a savage oath, for he saw that Captain Emmett had the situation as it was.

Then he said:

"Well, believe as you please, but the fact remains that you know where the mine is and that you are safe in my hands."

"Granted again."

"Now it is your life against your secret."

"You demand my secret?"

"Yes."

"Of Nick Nye's mine?"

"Yes."

"Or will take my life?"

"I will."

"These are the terms you offer, my life against gold?"

"Yes."

"And the boy?"

"Is not included."

"The mine is said to be a rich one."

"So I have heard."

"It is worth both our lives."

"Well, I will give you both your freedom if you will guide me to the mine."

"Yes, and have your warriors ambush and kill us before we have gone far on our trail home."

"I would not thus break faith with you."

"Bah! you would not break faith, you human hyena! Don't talk of what you would not do, for you would be guilty of any crime; in fact, I believe there is not a single crime that does not lie at your door." Captain Emmett spoke with fierce emphasis.

The renegade chief uttered an angry cry and sprang to his feet, his knife in his hand.

"Strike, you coward renegade—strike at the heart of Dashing Charlie and myself, for we do not fear to die," cried Captain Emmett, dauntlessly, while Charlie added:

"Yes, you would kill us, Red Hair the Renegade, only you fear you would destroy your hopes of finding the mine."

"Strike at our hearts, if you dare!"

The renegade, infuriate as he was, did not strike, but with an oath returned the knife to its scabbard, while he said in a voice perfectly calm now, for he regretted his hasty action and temper:

"Do you refuse to trade the secret you possess for the lives of your nephew and yourself?"

"I utterly and emphatically refuse, renegade," was the ready response of Captain Emmett, and he looked the white Sioux defiantly in the eyes as he spoke.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CHIEF'S TERMS.

RED HAIR, the renegade, was foiled by the courage and determination of Captain Emmett.

He saw that the man meant just what he said, and there was that in his face that told him that wild horses could not drag the secret from him.

The boy also showed the same determination to suffer with his uncle, whether he knew the secret of the mine or not.

Scalper Sam had so far not spoken, but now he said in a low tone to the chief:

"This is what he says when suffering no pain; but put him to the torture and see if that does not wring from him his secret."

"Ah, Sam, I believe you are right, and I will do as you say," cried the chief quickly.

He cared not to have the band witness the torturing of his prisoners, for they might learn that he was trying to force from them a secret, and not torturing them for their pleasure.

"I will send for several of my trusted warriors, and let them feel what torture is," said the renegade chief.

Then Dashing Charlie said something in a quick whisper to Captain Emmett, who at once called out:

"Does the great medicine-chief, Snow Head, not know that we are under the protection of the Sacred White Arrow, and were given into his keeping by the Sioux Queen?"

The old scamp had been so willing to see pale-faces tortured, that he had allowed his memory to fail him on this point; but thus reminded by the words of the captain, he responded:

"Yes, the White Arrow protects them, chief."

"But you said that I had the claim upon the man if not the boy," the renegade said in the Sioux tongue.

"True, but the Sioux Queen must know this law and then yield her claim, which she cannot refuse to do and be a good Sioux."

"Well, call for a brave and request him to seek the Singing Dove and ask her to come here."

The medicine-man summoned a brave by a call upon a reed whistle which hung at his belt, and he was sent to the tepee of the Singing Dove to request her presence at the Medicine Lodge of the Snow Head.

"Now I will try another plan," said the renegade chief, and he turned once more to the prisoners.

"Emmett?"

"Well, renegade?"

"You love this boy?"

"As my own."

"You would wish to see him free?"

"Above all things."

"If I will let him go will you tell me the secret I ask?"

"If I refuse?"

"Then I shall take the Sioux law in my own hands and shall torture the boy to death before your very eyes."

"He is protected by the White Arrow."

"The medicine-chief will tell you that all are so protected, unless they are the prisoners of the head chief."

"Is this so, old man?" asked Captain Emmett, quickly.

"The Red Hair has spoken with a straight tongue," was the answer.

"Indeed! spoken the truth for once in your life, have you, renegade?"

"Well I'll wager a wagon load of terms the truth has blistered your tongue."

"Do you accept my terms?" asked the renegade, controlling his temper.

"I'll tell you what I'll do."

"Well?"

"Send the boy under a flag of truce to my partner, Doctor Chalmers at Omaha, and let him send me a receipt for him which I will know is bona fide and I will agree to your terms."

"You will tell me the secret of the mine?"

"I will guide you to it, for as I have not the maps and directions with me, you could not find it, and I alone could conduct you there."

"You will do this?" eagerly said the renegade chief.

"I will."

"If you refuse, the boy shall undergo the worst torture an Indian brain can invent."

"Why call upon an Indian when you are far more cruel than the worst of them?"

"Do you agree to let the boy go free?"

"I do."

"Remember, if the receipt brought back does not give me proof that he is safe, you will never know the secret of the mine."

"I will send the boy by one who will deliver him in safety, and bring the receipt you ask; but you must guarantee safety to my messenger."

"Of course, for how would I know of Dashing Charlie's safety if the messenger did not return here?"

"When do you wish him to start?"

"At any time you deem best."

"Well, remember that this gains the boy's freedom alone?"

"I only ask for that; as for myself I do not care."

"Once I have found the mine I shall repay

the Indians for the loss of the boy by putting you to death."

"I do not for a moment doubt your intention in that respect, so would ask nothing for myself."

"You are wise; you will not be disappointed; but I am glad you have come to my terms, Captain Emmett."

"But I have not."

"You?" and all eyes turned upon Dashing Charlie, who said in a determined way:

"I refuse to accept my life, renegade, upon the terms you offer."

CHAPTER XXIV.

DASHING CHARLIE HAS HIS SAY.

THE firm stand taken by Dashing Charlie non-plused the renegades, and Captain Emmett as well.

The latter had no chance to communicate his views to Charlie, and, dealing with a clever scoundrel, he had determined to play a double game himself.

He had determined to send Charlie with the messenger, and it had floated through his mind just what he would do.

He and Doctor Chalmers had a peculiar cipher, known only to themselves, for correspondence.

In writing his letter to the doctor, demanding safety for the messenger who brought Charlie to his hands, and in telling him to write a receipt for the boy, he intended to so word it that the doctor would read between the lines.

In other words he would make known that he wished him to repair at once to a certain spot he would name, with the men who had accompanied them on the expedition, and lie in ambush there for his coming with the renegade chief and the warriors whom he would take along as a guard.

What that force would be he could not tell, but he did not believe that many would be let into the secret.

Instead therefore of guiding the renegade to the mine of Nick Nye, he would guide him into an ambush, from which there was every chance that he would himself escape while Red Hair and his warriors would go under, and he meant to urge to have Scalper Sam go also, to make a clean sweep of it.

But Dashing Charlie not knowing the plot was not going to accept his freedom at the expense of his uncle's life.

In fact, had he known it, the boy would not have deserted and left his uncle there with only the ambushing by the Rescuers as his chance of escape.

In vain did Captain Emmett try to make signs and faces that he would understand how he was playing a part.

Dashing Charlie saw the sign and believed that his uncle was simply fooling him to get him to go with the messenger, and he said in his decided way when aroused:

"I will not go, I will not accept my freedom upon such terms."

"Then you will remain here to be tortured."

"So be it, chief."

"It will simply end in the death of your uncle and yourself."

"Oh no."

"You do not believe it?"

"I do not."

"Why?"

"Because you are no fool, Chief Red Hair."

"I do not understand you."

"Yes, you do."

"I say that I do not."

"Then you are dumb because you wish to be."

"Come, what do you mean?"

"You will not kill us."

"Why not?"

"You won't kill the goose that lays the golden egg."

"I do not understand the application."

"Well, with uncle dead, you will never know about the mine, while as long as he lives you will have hopes that he will yield and tell you."

"Then you do not know?" quickly asked the renegade chief, seeing his chance to solve this mooted question in his mind as to the boy's knowing about the mine.

Quick as a flash Dashing Charlie saw the drift of his question and answered with emphasis:

"Oh, yes, I do!"

"What a boy," muttered Captain Emmett in amazement at Charlie's way of fighting off leaving him.

"You do know the secret?"

"I do."

"Did your uncle tell you?"

"No, I never did," cried the captain.

"He knows nothing of the mine."

"Such was my idea," the renegade said.

"Your idea is away off the trail, for though my uncle may not have told me, I copied for him the maps and all the directions when he expected to bring them with him—see?"

Captain Emmett uttered a groan at the downright story told by the boy, and Charlie laughed at the expression he saw upon his uncle's face.

"Then I shall keep you too, boy, and under no circumstances allow you to go, for should one of you die by accident I will have the other to torture the secret out of."

"If we weaken, which in my opinion we will not do," Dashing Charlie coolly said.

"My nephew is playing you false, chief, for he knows nothing about the mine."

"This you say now."

"It is true, and the only way to have me guide you to it is to send the boy by messenger to Omaha as I said."

"I will do no such thing now, Captain Emmett, for I am sure from what the boy says that he does know all about the mine, and so I shall hold him a prisoner here, and if you do not yield from seeing him tortured, I will see if he cannot be made to talk when he sees the sufferings you will have to undergo."

"You are a fiend inhuman," said Captain Emmett, and as he spoke the Sioux Queen appeared in sight coming toward the Medicine Lodge.

CHAPTER XXV.

PUT TO THE TEST.

THE Indian queen came on at a gallop, the brave sent after her following in her rear.

She was mounted upon her beautiful black mustang, and rode with the ease of one born in the saddle.

When all others left their horses below in the valley, when visiting the old medicine-chief, and walked up to his tepee, the young Indian girl rode directly up the steep and perilous path to the lodge.

Suddenly she appeared over the ledge and dashed directly up to where the group stood, the Indian warrior remaining behind, as though not caring to venture the dangerous ascent on horse-back.

There were now in the group the old medicine-man, the renegade chief, Scalper Sam and the two prisoners.

Singing Dove acknowledged the deferential salutes given her, and looked at the renegades and then at Snow Head in an inquiring way.

Not a soul spoke, and then the maiden said:

"I was sent for by the chief, Red Hair."

"I am here."

Thus appealed to, the renegade chief had to speak.

"The Red Hair sent to have the Sioux Queen come here to hear the words of the head chief."

"The Singing Dove is here."

"The Singing Dove has ears."

"Let the head chief speak," was the quiet rejoinder.

"These two are the prisoners of the head chief."

"The Singing Dove is not blind."

"She sees them."

"They being the prisoners of the head chief, the Singing Dove must yield her claim to having pledged them under the Sacred White Arrow."

The girl started, for she seemed to read now the drift of the renegade's words.

But her next words showed that she was posted in Sioux law, for she said:

"The Singing Dove hears, and as the head chief lays claim to these captives, she will call the warriors who were in the battle and ask them if, with his own hands, at risk of life, the Red Hair did capture these captives."

Red Hair uttered a low imprecation, for he saw that the girl was posted on Sioux law.

He had tried to claim both as his captives personally, and thus get them released from the claim of protection by the girl, who could, if such was the case, never hold them so pledged.

But he saw that he must tell the truth, if the proof was to be shown before his warriors, and so he replied sharply:

"The Red Hair, at the risk of his own life, did capture, unaided, this man, the white fur-trader, who led his men against our village."

"And the little chief?" asked the Singing Dove.

"He was captured by the Red Scalper here, and unaided, and at the peril of his life."

"The Red Scalper is not a head chief of the Sioux."

"He was acting under the orders of the Red Hair."

"That is nothing, he is not a chief."

"Then you refuse to relinquish your claim?"

"The boy is under the protection of the Sacred White Arrow, and must so remain."

"If the Red Hair is the captor of the white chief, then the Singing Dove cannot hold him under the pledge of the White Arrow."

"Then the man is in my power."

"What would the Red Hair do with the white chief?"

"He will kill him unless he obeys his commands," was the savage reply.

Both Captain Emmett and Dashing Charlie had sat motionless during this conversation, carried on in the Sioux language.

Every word of it was understood by Charlie, though Captain Emmett had only picked up a word here and there.

Dashing Charlie saw how matters were going, and he said in a low whisper to his uncle:

"Sioux law gives to a head chief who personally captures a prisoner, the right to claim his captive, even from the pledge of the White Arrow."

"The chief captured me, then?"

"Yes, uncle."

"And so can claim me?"

"He has done so, alas!"

"Is Scalper Sam a chief?"

"No, uncle."

"He captured you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, it seems that the head chief will win yet."

"I only hope the Sioux Queen will be brave enough to resist."

"We have no claim upon her, Charlie."

"We had none before, uncle, yet she faced the maddened Sioux to save us."

"True, Charlie, but the head chief has been plotting some mischief with Scalper Sam, and he is about to speak."

Then they turned to the renegade, who had evidently decided upon his course as regarded the prisoners.

CHAPTER XXVI.

SINGING DOVE'S CLAIM.

THE short, whispered conversation between the two renegades seemed to have decided the head chief in what he should do.

He turned to the maiden and said:

"As the Singing Dove understands Sioux law she knows that she must yield her claim to that man."

"The white chief?"

"Yes."

"She no longer can claim the protection of the White Arrow for him."

"Then she yields her claim here in the presence of the medicine-chief, Snow Head?"

"The Singing Dove is a Sioux."

"She obeys the laws of her people."

But the man was not satisfied with an indirect answer and asked:

"Does the Singing Dove yield her claim?"

"To the white chief?"

"Yes, if you so call that man."

"Yes."

"And the boy?"

"She does not relinquish her claim, given by the White Arrow, to the little chief."

"She still protects him?"

"It is her right."

"Against the wishes of her people?"

"Yes, for she intends to adopt the little chief as her son."

"Ah! the Singing Dove does not know the Sioux laws as well as she thinks."

"The Head Chief has a snake's tongue, for he is a fool to say what he does," was the hot reply.

"Does not the law of the Sioux prevent their maidens from adopting a child?"

"It does."

"The squaws who have husbands alone can adopt a child."

"The Singing Dove is no fool."

"She knows."

"Yet she says that she will adopt the pale-face boy?"

"The Singing Dove has spoken, and now let the Red Hair speak."

"What is there to say?"

"The Red Hair has the white chief for his prisoner?"

"He has."

"And will put him to death?"

"Unless he obeys my command."

"What is it?"

"I am Head Chief of the Sioux and the Singing Dove has no right to question my acts," was the haughty reply of Red Hair.

"My uncle and I know where a gold mine is, and the Red Hair threatens to kill us by torture if we do not guide him to—"

It was Charlie who quickly uttered the words, but he was checked by a violent blow given him by the Red Hair.

"Coward! you would kill a woman in irons I verily believe."

"You a chief! You are a cowardly dog!" hissed Captain Emmett, savagely, as Dashing Charlie was half stunned by the blow.

In his fury at the insulting words the Red Hair forgot himself and was springing toward the bound man, helpless and at his mercy, when, quick as a flash, there came before his eyes the form of the Singing Dove.

He started, stepped back, and said, fiercely:

"Does the Singing Dove dare stand in the path of the Head Chief of the Sioux?"

"The Singing Dove dares to assert her rights."

"Her rights? What are they?"

"She claims this man!"

"She but now relinquished her claim, as the medicine-chief here will bear witness, and Scalper Sam also."

"To protect him by means of the White Arrow, yes."

"Then what claim has she now?"

"A better one."

"The Singing Dove talks like a silly child. What claim has she, other than that she held through the Sacred White Arrow?"

All gazed upon her in wonder and expectancy. She wore a smile that showed she had some deep plot to spring upon them, which her little brain had evolved.

Dashing Charlie had recovered somewhat from the blow, while his darkly bronzed forehead was swelling under the bruise of the brutal Red Hair's fist.

But, he forgot his blow in watching the Singing Dove.

Captain Emmett, ever calm, was now somewhat excited at the turn affairs had taken. Had the brave and clever girl some deeper game yet to play to save them?

She had said she would adopt Charlie as her own son, though Sioux laws only allowed a married woman to do so.

Now she seemed desirous of saving both himself and Charlie from some reason known only to herself.

Even Red Hair was nervous, for what could she say now that would lose him his prisoner?

That she was clever he had to admit, and that she was perfectly versed in the laws of her tribe she had pretty clearly demonstrated.

Was he, at last, to lose his prisoner by some trick known to her, and of which he was ignorant?

He turned to the medicine-chief, but he too seemed at a loss to fathom the girl's purpose.

"Will the Singing Dove speak?" at last said the Red Hair.

"The Singing Dove claims the white chief as her husband," was the startling response of the Indian girl.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE WINNER.

THE astounding claim of the Singing Dove to still protect the prisoner brought a yell from the lips of the Red Hair that rung wildly through the valley.

Could he believe what he heard?

It was true that it was allowed by Sioux law for a maiden to claim a prisoner doomed to die, thus adopting him into the tribe by making him her husband.

Many a poor fellow had thus been saved from a terrible death, and it was clung to with a joy no matter how hideous might be the object who had so suddenly bestowed her affections upon him.

But here was the Sioux Queen, the beauty of the tribe, and one beloved by the bravest warriors and most noted chiefs.

The maiden who had refused the love of the great head chief, whose heart was supposed to have been carried away by the young fugitive chief, Red Spirit, falling in love with a man double her years, a pale-face, a foe to her tribe, one who had made many a Sioux warrior bite the dust and who had come to the scene where he then was to destroy and then kill her people.

The medicine-chief also seemed as though willing to echo the yell of amazement and fury of the head chief.

The old man seemed absolutely nonplused and showed it.

What could the young Indian girl mean?

Then there was the Red Scalper. He appeared at first astounded; then it seemed as though his face expressed gratification that the Indian girl had outwitted the Red Hair in the game they were playing, but not from any desire to see the prisoner spared.

As for Charlie he did not now know that he had received any blow. He, too, knew the customs of the Sioux, he had heard what the Singing Dove had said, and was certain that it was her right, if she cared to assert it.

He saw that his uncle was bewildered, as if not comprehending all that had passed, so he quickly whispered to him:

"She intends to marry you."

"Oh Lord!"

The exclamation was one of surprise, half dread, and a feeling he could not express, all mingled.

He had escaped the machinations of mothers with marriageable daughters, had steered clear of all benedictine shoals, and was to be caught and wedded by an Indian girl in an instant. It was a surprise to him.

The fact that it would checkmate the Red Hair was his first joy, and then came the joy at his own escape from death, or the clutches of his worst foe.

The Singing Dove was the least moved of all present. She had made known her claim, avowed her intention of making the white chief her husband, and she intended to have her way.

Who could gainsay her?

The old medicine-man was silenced; and as for the Red Hair his yell of rage, disappointment, venom and surprise expressed his sentiments, while he now stood like one suffering in wild-eyed horror from fear of some dreaded fate.

Having uttered her fateful words the Indian girl determined to maintain them by instant procedure; so she took from about her neck a large necklace of grizzly claws. This had been her father's, and only a chief could wear it.

Instantly she threw the string over the head of the man she had honored so, and at the same moment whipped her hunting-knife from her belt and had severed the rawhide bands about his wrists and ankles.

Then she took from her head her own war-bonnet and placed it upon the head of Captain Emmett, who, the moment he was free had quickly risen to his feet.

He bent his head and bore his honors calmly, while he gave a glance at the face of the Red Hair, which was a study for a sculptor, so much of hate and disappointment did it express.

Then the Indian girl knelt before the white man and taking his hands pressed them upon her head, while she said in a low, earnest tone:

"The Singing Dove acknowledges her master. Her tepee is to be the home of the white chief, who is to be a chief among her people."

"He has proven himself a brave foe; he will now be a brave friend to the Sioux."

"The Singing Dove claims the white chief as her husband."

"Let the Snow Head, the great medicine-chief of her tribe, cast over them the robe of the white beaver."

She pointed to her pony as she spoke, where the large white robe was thrown over the saddle. The beautiful robe was composed of a dozen skins of the white beaver.

The old medicine-man glanced at the Red Hair.

Dare he disobey the Singing Dove to consummate the marriage of their queen to a pale-face foe?

Dare he obey the Red Head should he order him to obey the command of the Indian queen? He glanced at the girl, then at the Red Hair.

"The Snow Head is not to obey any orders but mine," firmly said the Red Hair.

"Does the medicine-chief, who was my father's brother, obey the command of his queen or the pale-face chief?" asked the girl.

She triumphed, for the medicine-chief stepped to the black pony, drew off the robe of white beaver-skins, and, walking to where Captain Emmett and the Singing Dove stood side by side, cast it over their heads.

Its folds fell about them almost to the ground, shielding them from view, and this last act of the medicine-man completed the Sioux ceremony of marriage.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE NEW CHIEF.

NO one realized more than did the Singing Dove the bold act she had done.

What her motive was for saving the lives of the boy and his uncle she kept to herself, but Captain Emmett felt sure it was not a case of love at first sight upon her part for him.

He had acquiesced in the Sioux marriage ceremony, as it was performed before the medicine-lodge upon the ledge, with more of triumph in his heart at seeing Red Hair vanquished than for any other reason.

He saw that the Red Hair was at the end of

his rope, so to speak. The renegade, indeed, seemed fairly stunned. His prisoner had escaped him and in a manner that was perfectly legitimate, according to the Sioux mode of thinking.

The Singing Dove had made her choice for a husband a chief and then had wed him.

The great medicine-chief of the tribe had consummated the ceremony, and that settled it.

Not long did the young girl stand under the sacred beaver robe, only until its folds had sheltered the two from sight for an instant; then she threw it off and placed it upon the shoulders of her newly wedded husband, thus bestowing another honor upon him, and one which protected him from the hand of any Sioux that in anger might be raised against him.

The Singing Dove did not intend to half-do matters. She was going clear to the end of the trail she had struck, and Red Hair seemed to realize that determination.

Dashing Charlie was fully protected by the touch of the Sacred White Arrow, but that was not enough for the young Sioux Queen.

She intended to carry her threat into execution and adopt the boy as her son.

A moment before as an unmarried woman she could not do so.

Now she was a wife, the bride of the white chief, and she at once proceeded to carry out her intention.

"Let the medicine-chief, Snow Head, know that the Singing Dove claims the little chief as her son."

"Does the medicine-chief hear?"

"The Snow Head has heard," was the solemn answer.

"Has the Red Scalper heard?"

"The Red Scalper has heard," answered the renegade with a smile.

"And has the Red Hair heard the words of the Singing Dove?"

It seemed cruel that she should appeal to the renegade chief as another witness.

But then the woman was revealed in this in the heart of the Indian girl; she did just what her white sisters in civilization so often do, hit at a man when he is down.

"The Red Hair has ears," was the angry retort of the renegade chief.

"Then the Singing Dove claims her three witnesses to her intention," was the quick reply and the man uttered an oath as he saw that he had unwittingly aided her.

With this he wheeled and walked away rapidly down the ledge.

He had been defeated and his action was an admission of it.

Revengeful in heart he was, but he would abide his time to strike.

His ally in crime, the Red Scalper, followed, after he had said in his sarcastic way:

"The Red Scalper congratulates the Indian bride and her pale-face husband!"

With this he turned to follow the renegade chief, but halted and looking back, as he added:

"And, you, my boy, I am glad to see escape from a cruel fate, for I like you."

With this he disappeared down the steep trail.

A silence of a moment followed the departure of the last of the two renegades, and then Captain Emmett spoke.

"My brave girl, you have saved my life, and the life of this youth who is as dear to me as my own son."

"If my devotion to you can repay you in any way you shall have it."

The voice of the brave, strong man trembled as he spoke, and the Indian girl read intuitively that he was touched deeply by what she had done.

Stepping forward quickly she now released Dashing Charlie of his bonds, and the boy at once kissed her, while he said:

"Don't be jealous, uncle, for I'm only a boy!"

Then did the Sioux Queen decide to go to her tepee and take with her the white chief and her adopted son.

"You must ride. I will ride behind you," she said, still carrying out the Sioux idea of a warrior taking his bride to his tepee on horseback.

Leading the black pony down the hill the queen bade her newly-made husband mount, and then she sprang lightly up behind him.

"The medicine-chief, Snow Head, will come with us," she had said, and the old Indian obeyed, walking by the side of the boy.

The strange party at once riveted the eyes of the Indians.

The scene stilled the noise of the village.

The renegade chief had acknowledged himself beaten, and, beginning at once to play his hand

for revenge, had told what warriors he had met of their queen's act, admitting that he sanctioned it, as well as had the medicine-chief.

So the news spread from lip to lip, and it was known that the Singing Dove had claimed the white chief as her husband, the pale-face youth as her adopted son.

The fact that she rode behind the white man, upon the same horse, both seated upon the robe of white beaver-skins, was, in itself, an advertisement of the marriage.

There was silence in the camp until the party disappeared in the canyon, leading to the tepee of the Singing Dove; then one burst of yells was heard, echoing far and wide.

Indian drums and music was heard, with voices of joy over the occasion, for where the Red Hair had made them such a good chief, according to the Indian view of his merits, which were cruelty and hatred of his race, why would not the new white chief be like him?

This was Indian logic, and so it was accepted, and the Sioux were even happy over the marriage of the Singing Dove, all except the disappointed lovers.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A STRANGE PARTNERSHIP.

To say that the Red Hair was bitterly roiled at the situation, would be to express it very mildly.

He called his chiefs to council, and told them what had occurred at the Medicine Lodge, and expressed himself as satisfied.

This he did to throw all off their guard.

He intended to begin his plot at once. He must find some young braves to take into his confidence.

Of course his strong ally would be his trusted friend, Scalper Sam.

It was night when the Red Scalper went to the tepee of the Red Hair.

He had been told to come there at that time, and he found the renegade chief expecting him.

"Well, Sam, what do you think of all this?" asked the Red Hair, when his friend had taken a seat and lighted his pipe.

"It's wonderful."

"The girl is a wonder."

"Keen as a brier."

"She thwarted me."

"Completely."

"She fell in love with that fellow at sight, that is certain."

"Well, he's a fine-looking chap, chief."

"Oh, yes, I admit that; but I have another idea about it."

"Well?"

"I believe she formed a real strong affection for the boy when he was a captive, and tried to save him; and for his sake saved his uncle."

"Maybe, chief, for there is no telling what a woman will do, be she white, red or black."

"I'm afraid of 'em all."

"Now, of course, the fact that Emmett remains here is so much more in our favor."

"How so?"

"He will take his chance when it comes up and go to that mine."

"Or the boy will."

"They are only playing Indian, for they do not intend to remain here when the time comes for them to have had a look at that mine and then skip away."

"That is my opinion."

"And we must watch them."

"Sure."

"And put several young bucks who can be trusted upon their track."

"No young bucks can be trusted."

"W at do you mean?"

"We must keep this secret for ourselves."

"I will watch the boy, and the man also."

After a silence of some minutes, in which both were lost in deep thought, Red Scalper said:

"I'll play devoted pard to the boy, and through him can keep my eye on the man."

"Good!"

"We want all that gold for ourselves, and you know we are only playing Injun too."

"Yes, until we can get away with that gold."

"We can do it; but we have got to be friends with those two."

"Yes."

"Make them believe we trust and love them now they have become real Indians, and I can get out of the boy all I wish to know."

"Do so."

"When the trap is set then I'll spring the trigger."

"And we'll bag the game."

"Certain, chief."

"Well, Scalper Sam, I leave all in your hands for I believe you can work it."

"Just see if I don't," was the answer, and Scalper Sam soon after departed for his own tepee, not far distant.

The Red Scalper had money.

He had also a number of things he had brought with him just to catch an Indian's eye.

The next morning he took some of his treasures and started out for a trade.

His object was to buy the best pony he could find in the village.

He soon hit upon one, a claybank with silver mane and tail, and a perfect beauty.

The bargain was made, and a fine Indian saddle and bridle were secured.

Then he started for the tepee of the Singing Dove.

He saw Dashing Charlie seated out under a tree cleaning his rifle, so he went up to him and said:

"Pard, we are going to be friends now, and I've got a peace-offering for you."

"I wish you to accept this pony from me."

The youth, at first, seemed about to refuse, when changing his mind, he said:

"I thought you hated me, Scalper Sam, because I suspected you of treachery and followed you on the trail here."

"That is past now with me, boy pard, for now we are all renegades together, as you and your uncle have also turned Injuns."

"But let us be friends now, for we pale-faces must stick together you know."

Dashing Charlie's face had flushed at the name of renegade, but he announced promptly:

"Agreed, Scalper Sam, and I guess uncle will see it as I do some day, though he too has felt that you and Red Hair were his worst foes."

"Oh, Red Hair got that gold mine into his head and it made a fool of him; but he'll come round all right now, for he told me he had nothing against Captain Emmett except that he wanted to capture and hang him as a renegade; but now that he is one too he will bury the tomahawk."

"I am glad of this, for we don't wish to have bad feeling between us here in the Indian village."

"Well, pard, take the pony, and we'll go on many a hunt together, for I don't hanker much after running with red-skins."

Dashing Charlie thanked the renegade warmly for the pony and shook hands with him, after which Scalper Sam handed him a bunch of beautiful beads for Singing Dove and walked away.

"Renegade am I? Well it's a pretty harsh name for uncle and myself to wear, but I suppose we must do it, for we are now as they used to say in the old church at home, Indians in good standing, I suppose," and Dashing Charlie laughed at his own conceit.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE RED SCALPER'S SECRET.

MONTHS passed away in the Indian village, and the white chief and Dashing Charlie had become favorites with the red people who had adopted them as their own kith and kin.

If there was any feeling in the hearts of the man and youth at the change that had come over their lives, the fact was not revealed upon their faces.

Charlie was the king among the Indian youths, for he could out-shoot, out-run, out-ride and swim faster and further than any of them.

He had learned to trail as unerringly as any warrior of the band, and he was liked by all the squaws and chiefs.

His uncle, ever dignified, was yet courteous to all, and he had been admitted into the Council Lodge of the chiefs.

Between the Red Hair and himself there was a certain constraint, though they were each one polite to the other.

With Scalper Sam Captain Emmett had become better friends, and between the Red Scalper and Charlie the warmest friendship seemed to exist.

The two hunted and fished together, went on long trails and really seemed inseparable.

Singing Dove seemed happy in her new life.

She became devotedly attached to her pale-face husband, and had told him that she had wanted to save him because Charlie had rescued her former lover, the Red Spirit.

That lover she had secretly met, after his rescue by Charlie, and he had told her all, and then he had gone his way to unite his fortunes with another tribe.

When he became a chief in the tribe of his adoption he promised to return and claim her as his wife.

But Indian maidens are also fickle, and Singing Dove was no exception to the rule, for she made up her mind to marry the handsome white prisoner, though had it not been to save him from the power of Red Hair, whom she hated, she might still have remained steadfast in her pledge to the fugitive chief, Red Spirit.

One day, something over half a year after the marriage of the Singing Dove to the white chief, Charlie and the Red Scalper started on a hunt together.

Their first camp at night was some twenty miles from the Indian village and they made a wicky-up to shelter them from a rainstorm that was gathering.

As they sat under its secure shelter, before a fire of blazing logs, the Red Scalper said:

"Boy pard, I have a mind to ask you a question!"

"Out with it, Red Scalper," answered Charlie.

"Does your uncle really know of a gold mine?"

"Yes."

"And you?"

"Yes."

"And yet you are content to live here in an Indian village when you have riches at your command and could go far away?"

"How could we get them, Red Scalper?"

"I can help you."

"How?"

"Well, boy pard, I'll tell you a secret, if you can keep one."

"Don't you think I can?"

"I've got an idea that you can, for you are no common kid, Charlie."

"Thank you for your good opinion, Pard Scalper."

"Well, if I tell you my secret, you will see that my worst foe is right in the Sioux village."

"Not my uncle?"

"Oh, no."

"Who, then?"

"It is—but, remember, you are to keep my secret."

"I will."

"It is Red Hair."

"No!"

"Yes."

"I thought you were the best of friends."

"Well, we are to his thinking; but I'll tell you that he is a trifle too black-hearted for me."

"No!"

"He is, for a fact."

"I am glad you are not friendly with him, Scalper Sam, for I am not, either. I hate him."

"Ditto, pard."

"Well, I'd never have suspected it; but he has injured you, maybe?"

"He made me his tool, he made me a wicked man, and now I have the chance to get even, to get revenge upon him."

"I'd do it."

"I'll tell you how I'll do it, and you can help me."

"All right."

"He made me a renegade, for I committed crimes for him that brought me here."

"He trusted me and sent me to Texas upon a mission of crime for him."

"I went there to find out about a woman whom he loved, a woman whom your uncle loved, too, when he was a younger man."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, for though your uncle does not recognize Red Hair under his paint, and in Indian garb, they were once rivals for the hand of a young lady."

"It seems your uncle prevented her from marrying Red Hair, at the wish of her parents, and that made the chief desperate, and he vowed revenge."

"But he committed crimes that made him fly from the country, and you know what he is now."

"The maiden did not marry your uncle, but a friend of his, and the chief found out that her home was in Texas, and he determined to seek revenge upon her."

"He first kidnapped her little girl, only a few years old, and sent her to live among some Mexicans."

"Then he sought to get her husband out of the way and sent me to kill him."

"You?"

"Yes, and I was to make it so appear that Comanches had killed him."

"You did not kill him?"

"No, I captured him, and the Comanches took him to their village, while we dressed a body up in his clothes and that was found and all sup-

posed it was the Texas ranchero, and that the Indians had killed him."

"And where is he now?"

"A captive among the Comanches if he is not dead."

"May he not have escaped?"

"He had not when I was in Texas last."

"When was that?"

"I had just come from there when I became scout for your uncle."

"And his wife thought he was dead?"

"Yes, and her child too."

"Poor woman."

"She is a beautiful woman to-day of thirty-five, though I told Red Hair she was dead."

"You told him so?"

"Yes, for she is very rich and he intended to go there and force her to become his wife."

"Instead of allowing him to do this, I told him she was dead, so he would never seek her again, for I intend to marry her myself."

"You?"

"Yes, I fell in love with her, you know, for I visited her ranch, and told her I would devote my life to finding her child."

"I intend to go back with you, making believe I thought her child was a boy, and that I rescued you from an Indian camp."

"She will welcome you as a son, in place of her daughter, and that will feather your nest."

"And you, Red Scalper?"

"Oh, I'll win the lady, see if I don't, for I can make believe I am rich, and can tell of my mine up here."

"When we can we will get away and come to the mine, which you know how to find."

"You bet I do."

"And we'll work it for all we are worth, and if you wish to help your uncle out some way, we can find a way to do it."

"Now, what do you say, pard?"

"When do you wish to go?"

"We'll start now, and the rain that will fall to-night will wash out our trail so that we cannot be followed, don't you see?"

"A good idea; but I hate to leave uncle."

"Well, we'll work for him soon as we can, and then I'll settle my revenge score on Red Hair."

"Now let us be off for Texas."

"I'm with you, for I am tired of living with Indians, Pard Sam."

"Ditto, and we'll now live like the gentlemen we are."

"So we will," assured Charlie, and the two broke camp, mounted their horses and rode away in the twilight just as the rain began to descend in torrents, washing out every trace of the trail they left behind them, even to that leading to their last camping-place.

CHAPTER XXXI.

PLAYING TO WIN.

A BEAUTIFUL woman sat upon the piazza of a handsome ranch-house in the State of Texas, some weeks after the night on which Red Scalper told his secret to Dashing Charlie.

Her face was beautiful even in its sadness, and yet the grief she had known had not added to her age it seemed, for she would scarcely be considered over thirty years of age.

But she was not alone, for with her were two others.

One of these two the reader will recognize as the Red Scalper.

The other was Dashing Charlie.

They had arrived only that morning, and a warm welcome had been given them by the woman, who had not forgotten the kind promise of the man who had said he would find her child for her.

After a year he had returned, and with him came, not her daughter, but a boy.

She was told his story by Samuel Colston, as the Red Scalper now called himself, and had been known to the fair lady ranchero, and she had at once taken the youth to her heart.

Charlie had played his part well, told how he knew nothing of his parents, and had been a dweller among the Indians as far back as he could remember.

Thus several days passed away at the ranch, ere Charlie and the lady found themselves alone together.

The Red Scalper had gone to the nearest town on business, and would be gone all day, and Charlie had asked his adopted mother to let him talk to her.

Then the two sat upon the piazza, and the lady heard the long story of the boy's life, as it really was.

She was told his name and told that he was the nephew of the companion of her girlhood,

Captain Emmett, who had never been really her lover, but a trusted friend.

He had prevented her marriage with Burton Fenwick, alias Red Hair, the renegade chief, in after years, because he knew him to be a villain, and Clara Carr had married Emmett's boon companion, Henry Hurlburt, against the wishes of her parents, who were infatuated with the one they believed rich and wished her to wed.

Mrs. Hurlburt listened to the whole story to the end, more and more shocked at all she heard of man's inhumanity and villainy, and at last Charlie continued:

"Now, on the way here we stopped at the village of the Comanches, among whom the Red Scalper lived for some years and who gave him his name."

"They are still friendly to him though at war with the whites, and while there we found that your husband was not dead, as you have believed, but had been for nearly two years a captive."

After the emotion felt by Mrs. Hurlburt at this news was over, Charlie went on to tell her that he had secretly left a letter he had written with her husband, telling him that he was coming back to rescue him.

Then he continued with still more startling news for the poor woman.

"You must not be surprised at anything I tell you, my dear Mrs. Hurlburt, for I have more to say that will rejoice your heart."

"You told me that you had never believed your daughter to be dead."

"You are right, for she too is alive, though not a captive."

"The villain Red Scalper told me another secret just before we reached your ranch."

"He said that your child had been sent to a Mexican family by Red Hair the renegade."

"They had sold her to an American settler and his wife who were childless, and who were seeking a home on the border."

"They went far to the northward and settled, and the Sioux raided their home."

"The man and his wife were killed, but the little girl was spared by the chief, who took her to his village and adopted her as his own, for he had a poor white woman captive who was his wife."

"The woman gladly welcomed the little girl, and the chief, who was the head ruler of his tribe, grew very fond of the little Dove."

"Dove! that was the name of my little girl," gasped the mother.

"It is the name of the Sioux Queen now, Singing Dove."

"How old is she?" quickly asked the lady.

"Sixteen I think, perhaps seventeen."

"Just what my child would have been."

"Describe her, please?"

"She has a tall, slender form, like your own, with a very dark complexion, large glorious eyes, black hair and dimples in each cheek and her chin, while there is a scar upon her left hand, the palm being torn."

"My God, I thank Thee! It is my child, for a vicious dog once tore her hand terribly."

"Well, I was struck with the resemblance the moment I saw you, my dear Mrs. Hurlburt, and the Red Scalper says that she is your child."

"But you told me, while relating your story, that the Singing Dove, as the Sioux Queen is called, married your uncle?"

"It is true, they were married according to the Sioux customs; but now let us arrange for the capture to-night of this man Red Scalper, and when he is jailed we can start northward, and my word for it that when we reach Omaha, Doctor Chalmers, my uncle's pard, will raise a band that will rescue those we love who are in Red Hair's village, for I can lead them by a secret trail I know of into the stronghold of the Sioux."

"Gladly, oh! so gladly will I go with you, my noble boy, my son, as you will ever be in my love for you, for you are to rescue my husband and child, and restore them to my long-sorrowing heart."

"I will do all in my power to rescue them and my uncle as well, while Red Hair and the Red Scalper shall be brought to punishment for their crimes," was Charlie's modest response.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE RESCUER.

THAT night the Red Scalper was aroused from a sound sleep, for he was very tired after his return home, by finding Dashing Charlie covering him with a revolver.

In the room also were several negro men belonging to the ranch, also covering him with weapons, and under the circumstances he offered

no resistance, other than cursing Dashing Charlie.

But the next day the Red Scalper was lodged in the village jail. Charlie had told the story of his crimes, and that he wished him brought to trial and punished.

The Texans were so willing to please the brave youth and the handsome lady, that they took the Red Scalper out of jail that night and strung him up to a tree, unheeding his protestations of innocence and his cries for mercy.

The next day, Charlie started on his mission to rescue Henry Hurlburt, the Comanches' captive.

Mrs. Hurlburt, with a negro woman, and a couple of black men-servants to drive the ambulance and care for the horses, started for a certain point in New Mexico, where she was to meet the daring young Rescuer.

She had waited at the rendezvous a couple of weeks, when one day up rode two horsemen.

One was Dashing Charlie, the other was her husband!

Charlie had boldly returned to the Comanche village, as the friend of the Red Scalper, and knowing that it would take too long to attempt a rescue, had told the head chief that the Red Scalper, his white brother, had sent a handsome lot of presents to him and his people, and some gold, with which to buy the captive they held, and which would prevent a large force of soldiers being sent against them to rescue him.

The Comanches yielded up their captive, and as he rode on with his boy Rescuer, Mr. Hurlburt heard the story which Charlie had to tell, that his wife was waiting him, and that their daughter lived, but, as a Queen of the Sioux!

Thus united, the party started northward, and at last coming to the river made their way by steamer.

Omaha was at last reached, and one night Doctor Chalmers was startled, as he sat in his quarters, by a slap on the shoulder, and a hearty:

"How are you, Doc?"

What Doc Chalmers said had best remain unsaid; but he gave Charlie a grizzly bear hug, and then remarked:

"Charlie, how you escaped I do not know; but at last I have got together force enough to invade the Indian country, and I was going to start to-morrow, for I always had hope that you and your uncle were alive."

"Then to-morrow we go, Doc, for uncle is alive, and I'll tell you how I escaped, if you will only go over to the tavern and meet some friends of mine."

These friends the doctor met were Mr. and Mrs. Hurlburt, and that they were glad to welcome him may be guessed. Then Doc Chalmers listened to the story of the young Rescuer, and said emphatically, when he had heard all:

"Charlie, you deserve the name of The Rescuer, and I'll baptize you as such when we get upon the trail."

"To-morrow we start, and this time three hundred brave bordermen go with me, and we are to have a thousand soldiers, with a light battery as a support, so we are sure to win."

"In fact, I'll pledge myself to win the game we have got to play to the bitter end."

And the next day the Rescuers started, and along with them went Mr. and Mrs. Hurlburt, and the negro servants, all well mounted.

And Dashing Charlie went as guide of the Rescuers.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CONCLUSION.

THE Rescuers fairly crept into the Sioux country.

They made a flank movement upon the village of Red Hair, approaching from a direction from which no foe was ever expected.

Charlie, in his going about with the Red Scalper, had made good use of his time, and discovered a trail known even to only a few of the Sioux.

It was by this trail that he led the Rescuers, and by night.

The military force came up as a support, and then the Rescuers pushed on silently—Dashing Charlie leading.

It was a bright moonlight night, and the Indians suspected no danger.

Down the secret pass crept that long line; into the stronghold they went, going in at a point near the canyon of the Sioux Queen.

Unseen, Charlie slipped away into the canyon while the men halted.

He was not gone long; but when he returned he was with his uncle, and the Singing Dove was by his side.

A moment more and, with one wild yell, the Rescuers charged down into the Indian village! It was a complete surprise; the Indians had been caught off their guard.

Then followed a scene such as the Sioux loved to visit upon the pale-faces, for death and destruction stalked abroad, hand in hand.

Straight toward the large tepee of the Red Hair went half a hundred men.

At their head rode Charlie, and by his side was Captain Emmett.

Behind them came Mr. Hurlburt and Doctor Chalmers, and the bordermen followed close on their heels.

Warriors were ridden down, tepees dashed over, and at last the band had brought to bay Red Hair the renegade and a number of braves who had rallied at his call.

"Don't shoot him! He must hang," said Ranchero Hurlburt, and his words were obeyed. The renegade was lassoed skilfully, dragged from his horse and in an instant was a prisoner.

But only for a short while, for the Rescuers would chance no escape of the detestable villain, and he was soon ushered into eternity at the end of a rope.

Thus perished Red Hair, the renegade, the man of many crimes.

The soldiers had quickly followed the Rescuers, and when the dawn came it showed the Indian village a wreck and the dead and dying scattered in every direction.

But why dwell on such a scene of horror?

Rather tell how the Singing Dove found her own parents to love them, and all felt that there was no doubt that she was their child.

But she loved her husband and clung to him devotedly in the new life she led amid scenes of civilization, for he was all in all to her and she was to him his greatest treasure.

The gold mine of Nick Nye was found, but proved to be of little worth, and what it did pan out Captain Emmett sent to the man's kindred.

And Dashing Charlie had added to his name the title of Rescuer, as Doc Chalmers had said, and in the years that followed became more and more a hero in the Land of the Setting Sun.

THE END.

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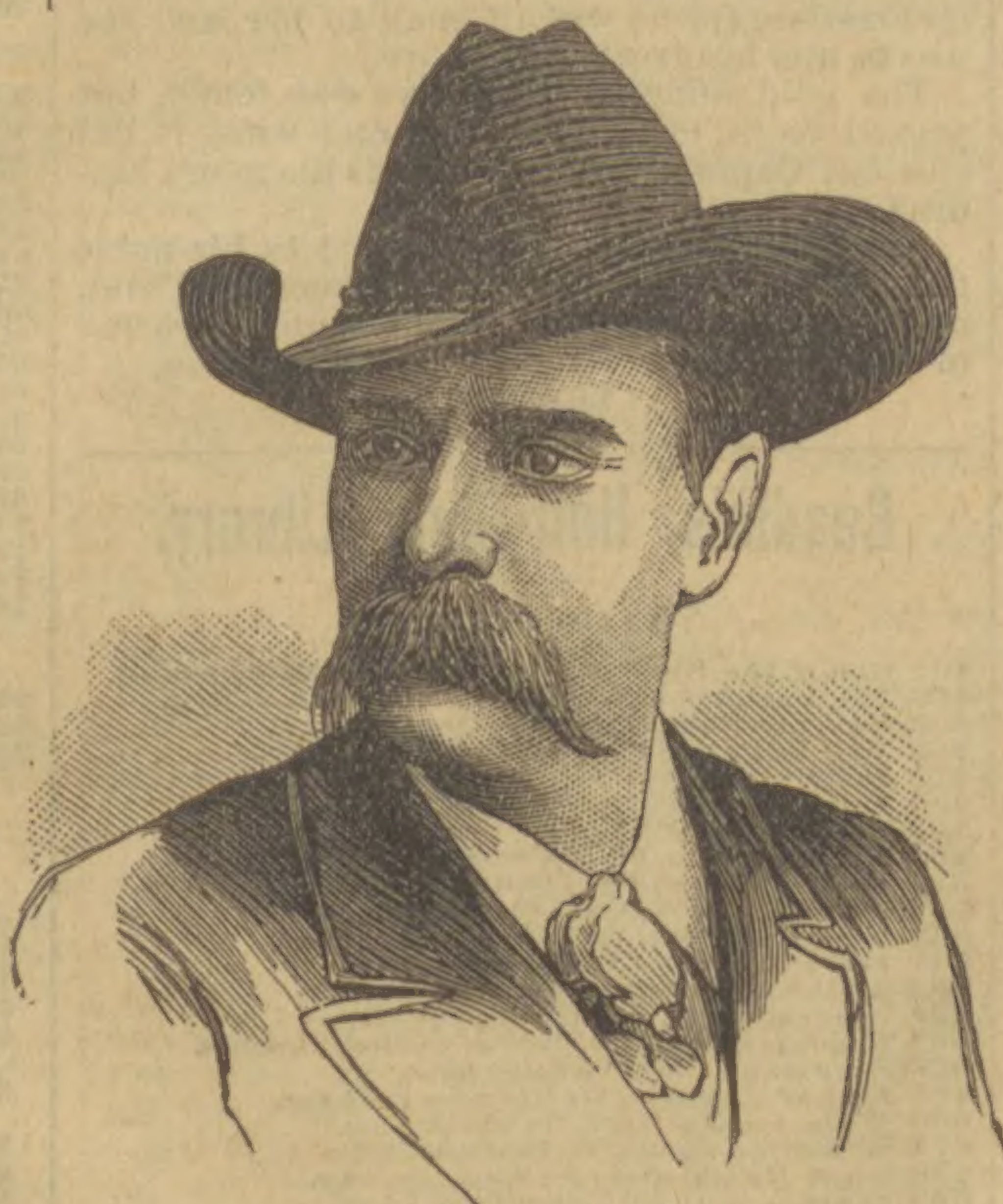
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